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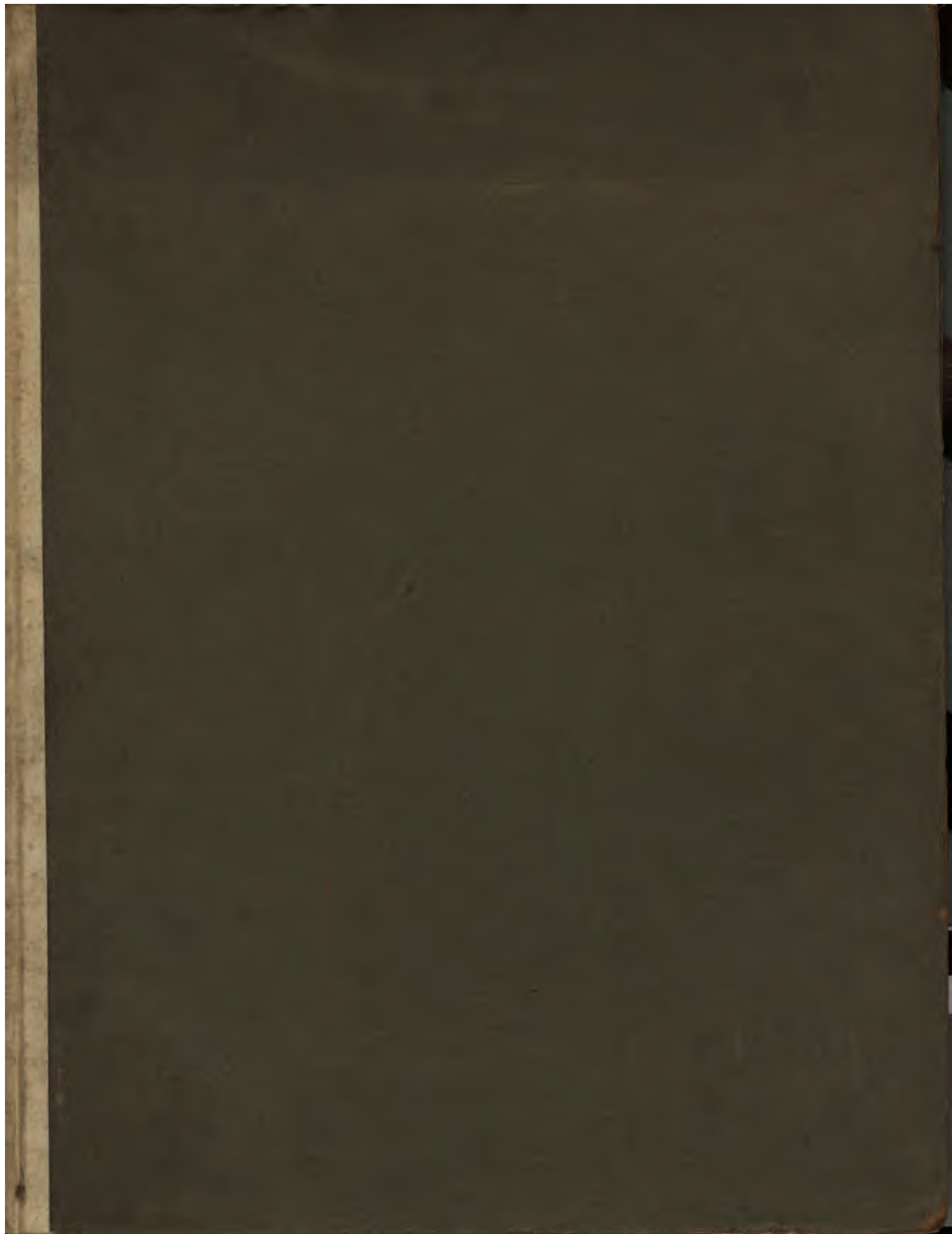
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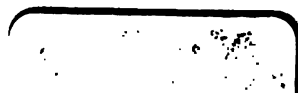
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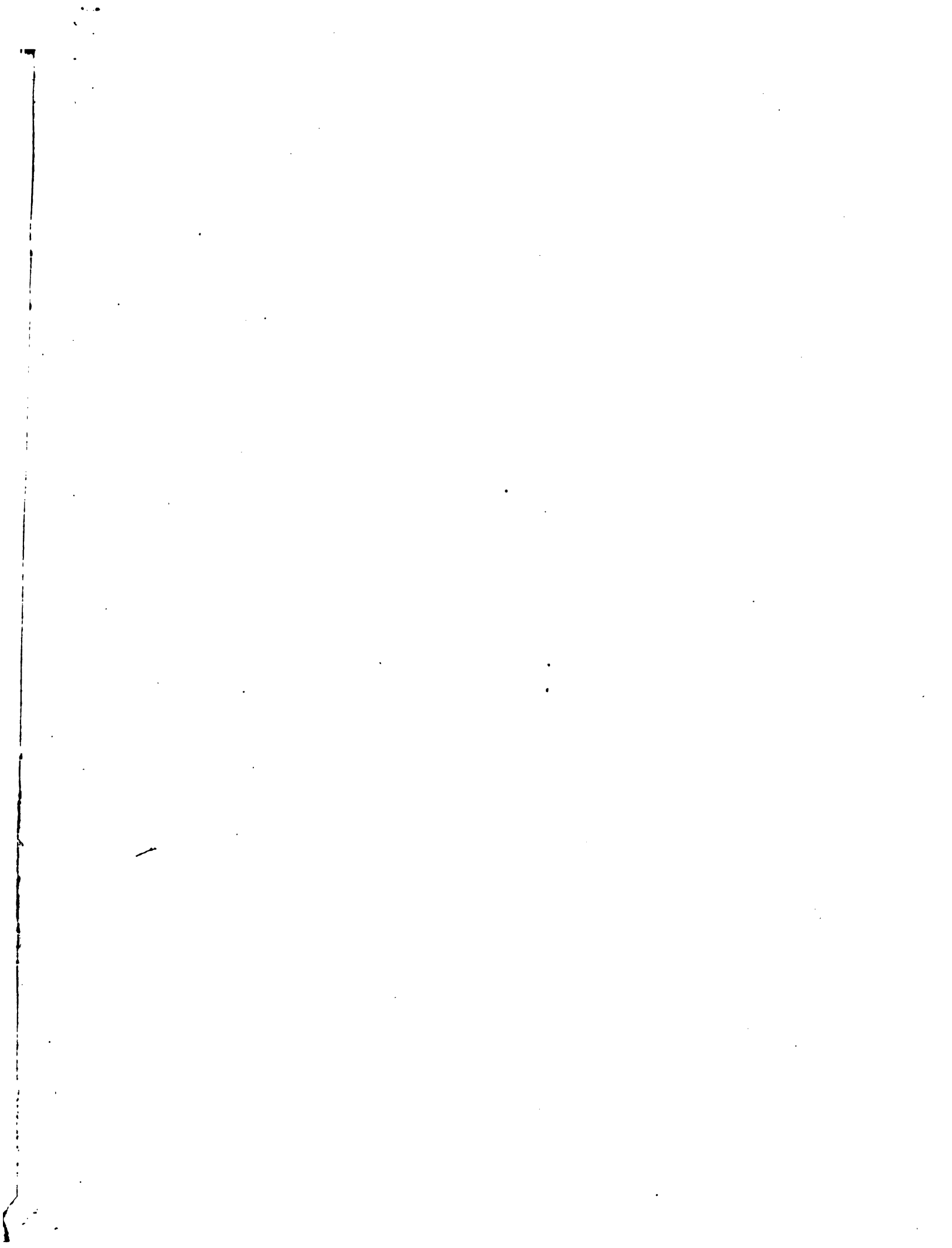
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ESSAYS

BY

THOMAS CARLYLE.



CRAIGENPUTTOCK, DUMFRIESSHIRE.
THE RESIDENCE OF THOMAS CARLYLE FROM 1828 TO 1834.

BURNS.

BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE DIAMOND NECKLACE.

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL, LIMITED.

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ESSAYS BY THOMAS CARLYLE.

BURNS.* [1828.]

IN the modern arrangements of society, it is no uncommon thing that a man of genius must, like Butler, 'ask for bread and receive a stone;' for, in spite of our grand maxim of supply and demand, it is by no means the highest excellence that men are most forward to recognise. The inventor of a spinning-jenny is pretty sure of his reward in his own day; but the writer of a true poem, like the apostle of a true religion, is nearly as sure of the contrary. We do not know whether it is not an aggravation of the injustice, that there is generally a posthumous retribution. Robert Burns, in the course of Nature, might yet have been living; but his short life was spent in toil and penury; and he died, in the prime of his manhood, miserable and neglected: and yet already a brave mausoleum shines over his dust, and more than one splendid monument has been reared in other places to his fame; the street where he languished in poverty is called by his name; the highest personages in our literature have been proud to appear as his commentators and admirers; and here is the *sixth* narrative of his *Life* that has been given to the world!

Mr. Lockhart thinks it necessary to apologise for this new attempt on such a subject: but his readers, we believe, will readily acquit him; or, at worst, will censure only the performance of his task, not the choice of it. The character of Burns, indeed, is a theme that cannot easily become either trite or exhausted; and will probably gain rather than lose in its dimensions by the distance to which it is removed by Time. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet; and this is probably true; but the fault is at least as likely to be the valet's as the hero's. For it is certain, that to the vulgar eye few things are wonderful that are not distant. It is difficult for men to believe that the man, the mere man whom they see, nay perhaps painfully feel, toiling at their side through the poor jostlings of existence, can be made of finer clay than themselves. Suppose that some dining acquaintance of Sir Thomas Lucy's, and neighbour of John a Combe's, had snatched an hour or two from the preservation of his game, and written us a *Life* of Shakespeare! What dissertations should we not have had,—not on *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, but on the wool-trade, and deer-stealing, and the libel and vagrant laws; and how the Poacher became a Player; and how Sir Thomas and Mr. John had Christian bowels, and did not push him to extremities! In like manner, we believe, with respect to Burns, that till the companions of his pilgrimage, the Honourable Excise Commissioners, and the Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt, and the Dumfries Aristocracy, and all the Squires and Earls, equally with the Ayr Writers, and the New and Old Light Clergy, whom he had to do with, shall have become invisible in the darkness of the Past, or visible only by light borrowed from *his* juxtaposition, it will be difficult to measure him by any true standard, or to estimate what he really was and did, in the eighteenth century, for his country and the world. It will be difficult, we say; but still a fair problem for literary historians; and repeated attempts will give us repeated approximations.

His former Biographers have done something, no doubt, but by no means a great deal, to assist us. Dr. Currie and Mr. Walker, the principal of these writers, have both, we think, mistaken one essentially important thing: Their own and the world's true relation to their author, and the style in which it became such men to think and to speak of such a man. Dr. Currie loved the poet

truly; more perhaps than he avowed to his readers, or even to himself; yet he everywhere introduces him with a certain patronising, apologetic air; as if the polite public might think it strange and half unwarrantable that he, a man of science, a scholar and gentleman, should do such honour to a rustic. In all this, however, we readily admit that his fault was not want of love, but weakness of faith; and regret that the first and kindest of all our poet's biographers should not have seen farther, or believed more boldly what he saw. Mr. Walker offends more deeply in the same kind: and both err alike in presenting us with a detached catalogue of his several supposed attributes, virtues and vices, instead of a delineation of the resulting character as a living unity. This, however, is not painting a portrait; but gauging the length and breadth of the several features, and jotting down their dimensions in arithmetical ciphers. Nay it is not so much as that: for we are yet to learn by what arts or instruments the mind *could* be so measured and gauged.

Mr. Lockhart, we are happy to say, has avoided both these errors. He uniformly treats Burns as the high and remarkable man the public voice has now pronounced him to be: and in delineating him, he has avoided the method of separate generalities, and rather sought for characteristic incidents, habits, actions, sayings; in a word, for aspects which exhibit the whole man, as he looked and lived among his fellows. The book accordingly, with all its deficiencies, gives more insight, we think, into the true character of Burns, than any prior biography: though, being written on the very popular and condensed scheme of an article for *Constable's Miscellany*, it has less depth than we could have wished and expected from a writer of such power; and contains rather more, and more multifarious quotations than belong of right to an original production. Indeed, Mr. Lockhart's own writing is generally so good, so clear, direct and nervous, that we seldom wish to see it making place for another man's. However, the spirit of the work is throughout candid, tolerant and anxiously conciliating; compliments and praises are liberally distributed, on all hands, to great and small; and, as Mr. Morris Birkbeck observes of the society in the backwoods of America, 'the courtesies of polite life are never lost sight of for a moment.' But there are better things than these in the volume; and we can safely testify, not only that it is easily and pleasantly read a first time, but may even be without difficulty read again.

Nevertheless, we are far from thinking that the problem of Burns's Biography has yet been adequately solved. We do not allude so much to deficiency of facts or documents,—though of these we are still every day receiving some fresh accession,—as to the limited and imperfect application of them to the great end of Biography. Our notions upon this subject may perhaps appear extravagant; but if an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of opinion that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. How did the world and man's life, from his particular position, represent themselves to his mind? How did co-existing circumstances modify him from without; how did he modify these from within? With what endeavours and what efficacy rule over them; with what resistance and what suffering sink under them? In one word, what and how produced was the effect of society on him; what and how produced was his effect on society? He who should answer these questions, in regard to any individual, would, as we believe, furnish a model of perfection in Biography. Few

* EDINBURGH REVIEW, No. 96.—*The Life of Robert Burns*. By J. G. Lockhart, LL.B. Edinburgh, 1828.

individuals, indeed, can deserve such a study; and many *lives* will be written, and, for the gratification of innocent curiosity, ought to be written, and read and forgotten, which are not in this sense *biographies*. But Burns, if we mistake not, is one of these few individuals; and such a study, at least with such a result, he has not yet obtained. Our own contributions to it, we are aware, can be but scanty and feeble; but we offer them with good-will, and trust they may meet with acceptance from those they are intended for.

Burns first came upon the world as a prodigy; and was, in that character, entertained by it, in the usual fashion, with loud, vague, tumultuous wonder, speedily subsiding into censure and neglect; till his early and most mournful death again awakened an enthusiasm for him, which, especially as there was now nothing to be done, and much to be spoken, has prolonged itself even to our own time. It is true, the 'nine days' have long since elapsed; and the very continuance of this clamour proves that Burns was no vulgar wonder. Accordingly, even in sober judgments, where, as years passed by, he has come to rest more and more exclusively on his own intrinsic merits, and may now be well-nigh shorn of that casual radiance, he appears not only as a true British poet, but as one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century. Let it not be objected that he did little. He did much, if we consider where and how. If the work performed was small, we must remember that he had his very materials to discover; for the metal he worked in lay hid under the desert moor, where no eye but his had guessed its existence; and we may almost say, that with his own hand he had to construct the tools for fashioning it. For he found himself in deepest obscurity, without help, without instruction, without model; or with models only of the meanest sort. An educated man stands, as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons and engines which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest time; and he works, accordingly, with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is *his* state who stands on the outside of that storehouse, and feels that its gates must be stormed, or remain forever shut against him! His means are the commonest and rudest; the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains; but no dwarf will hew them down with a pickaxe; and he must be a Titan that hurls them abroad with his arms.

It is in this last shape that Burns presents himself. Born in an age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen, and in a condition the most disadvantageous, where his mind, if it accomplished aught, must accomplish it under the pressure of continual bodily toil, nay of penury and desponding apprehension of the worst evils, and with no furtherance but such knowledge as dwells in a poor man's hut, and the rhymes of a Ferguson or Ramsay for his standard of beauty, he sinks not under all these impediments: through the fogs and darkness of that obscure region, his lynx eye discerns the true relations of the world and human life; he grows into intellectual strength, and trains himself into intellectual expertness. Impelled by the expansive movement of his own irrepressible soul, he struggles forward into the general view; and with haughty modesty lays down before us, as the fruit of his labour, a gift, which Time has now pronounced imperishable. Add to all this, that his darksome drudging childhood and youth was by far the kindest era of his whole life; and that he died in his thirty-seventh year: and then ask, If it be strange that his poems are imperfect, and of small extent, or that his genius attained no mastery in its art? Alas, his Sun shone as through a tropical tornado; and the pale Shadow of Death eclipsed it at noon! Shrouded in such baleful vapours, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendour, enlightening the world: but some beams from it did, by fits, pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colours, into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears!

We are anxious not to exaggerate; for it is exposition rather than admiration that our readers require of us here; and yet to avoid some tendency to that side is no easy matter. We love Burns, and we pity him; and love and pity are prone to magnify. Criticism, it is sometimes thought, should be a cold business; we are not so sure of this; but, at all events, our concern with

Burns is not exclusively that of critics. True and genial as his poetry must appear, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us. He was often advised to write a tragedy; time and means were not lent him for this; but through life he enacted a tragedy, and one of the deepest. We question whether the world has since witnessed so utterly sad a scene; whether Napoleon himself, left to brawl with Sir Hudson Lowe, and perish on his rock, 'amid the melancholy main,' presented to the reflecting mind such a 'spectacle of pity and fear' as did this intrinsically nobler, gentler and perhaps greater soul, wasting itself away in a hopeless struggle with base entanglements, which coiled closer and closer round him till only death opened him an outlet. Conquerors are a class of men with whom, for most part, the world could well dispense; nor can the hard intellect, the unsympathising loftiness and high but selfish enthusiasm of such persons inspire us in general with any affection; at best it may excite amazement; and their fall, like that of a pyramid, will be beheld with a certain sadness and awe. But a true Poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the 'Eternal Melodies,' is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation: we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us.

Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns; but with queenlike indifference she cast it from her hand, like a thing of no moment; and it was defaced and torn asunder, as an idle bauble, before we recognised it. To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable, but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny,—for so in our ignorance we must speak,—his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him; and that spirit, which might have soared could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom; and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived. And so kind and warm a soul; so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things! How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature; and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning! The 'Daisy' falls not unheeded under his ploughshare; nor the ruined nest of that 'wee, cowering, timorous beastie,' cast forth, after all its provident pains, to 'thole the sleety dribble and cranreuch cauld.' The 'hoar visage' of Winter delights him; he dwells with a sad and oft-returning fondness in these scenes of solemn desolation; but the voice of the tempest becomes an anthem to his ears; he loves to walk in the sounding woods, for 'it raises his thoughts to *Him that walleth on the wings of the wind.*' A true Poet-soul, for it needs but to be struck, and the sound it yields will be music! But observe him chiefly as he mingles with his brother men. What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling; what trustful, boundless love; what generous exaggeration of the object loved! His rustic friend, his nut-brown maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but a hero and a queen, whom he prizes as the paragons of Earth. The rough scenes of Scottish life, not seen by him in any Arcadian illusion, but in the rude contradiction, in the smoke and soil of a too harsh reality, are still lovely to him: Poverty is indeed his companion, but Love also, and Courage; the simple feelings, the worth, the nobleness, that dwell under the straw roof, are dear and venerable to his heart: and thus over the lowest provinces of man's existence he pours the glory of his own soul; and they rise, in shadow and sunshine, softened and brightened into a beauty which other eyes discern not in the highest. He has a just self-consciousness, which too often degenerates into pride; yet it is a noble pride, for defence, not for offence; no cold suspicious feeling, but a frank and social one. The Peasant Poet bears himself, we might say, like a King in exile: he is cast among the low, and feels himself equal to the highest; yet he claims no rank, that none may be disputed to him. The forward he can repel, the supercilious he can subdue; pretensions of wealth or ancestry are of no avail with him; there is a fire in that dark eye, under which the 'insolence of condescension' cannot thrive. In his abasement, in his extreme need, he forgets not for a moment the majesty of Poetry and Manhood. And yet, far as he feels himself above common men, he wanders not apart from them, but mixes warmly in their interests; nay throws himself into their arms, and, as it

were, entreats them to love him. It is moving to see how, in his darkest despondency, this proud being still seeks relief from friendship; unbosoms himself, often to the unworthy; and, amid tears, strains to his glowing heart a heart that knows only the name of friendship. And yet he was 'quick to learn;' a man of keen vision, before whom common disguises afforded no concealment. His understanding saw through the hollowness even of accomplished deceivers; but there was a generous credulity in his heart. And so did our Peasant show himself among us; 'a soul like an Æolian harp, in whose strings the vulgar wind, as it passed through them, changed itself into articulate melody.' And this was he for whom the world found no fitter business than quarrelling with smugglers and vintners, computing excise-dues upon tallow, and gauging ale-barrels! In such toils was that mighty Spirit sorrowfully wasted: and a hundred years may pass on before another such is given us to waste.

All that remains of Burns, the Writings he has left, seem to us, as we hinted above, no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him; brief, broken glimpses of a genius that could never show itself complete; that wanted all things for completeness: culture, leisure, true effort, nay even length of life. His poems are, with scarcely any exception, mere occasional effusions; poured forth with little premeditation; expressing, by such means as offered, the passion, opinion, or humour of the hour. Never in one instance was it permitted him to grapple with any subject with the full collection of his strength, to fuse and mould it in the concentrated fire of his genius. To try by the strict rules of Art such imperfect fragments, would be at once unprofitable and unfair. Nevertheless, there is something in these poems, marred and defective as they are, which forbids the most fastidious student of poetry to pass them by. Some sort of enduring quality they must have: for after fifty years of the wildest vicissitudes in poetic taste, they still continue to be read; nay, are read more and more eagerly, more and more extensively; and this not only by literary virtuosos, and that class upon whom transitory causes operate most strongly, but by all classes, down to the most hard, unlettered and truly natural class, who read little, and especially no poetry, except because they find pleasure in it. The grounds of so singular and wide a popularity, which extends, in a literal sense, from the palace to the hut, and over all regions where the English tongue is spoken, are well worth inquiring into. After every just deduction, it seems to imply some rare excellence in these works. What is that excellence?

To answer this question will not lead us far. The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognised: his *Sincerity*, his indisputable air of Truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wiredrawn refinings, either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience; it is the scenes that he has lived and laboured amidst, that he describes: those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can; 'in homely rustic jingle;' but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. Horace's rule, *Si vis me flere*, is applicable in a wider sense than the literal one. To every poet, to every writer, we might say: Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him. In culture, in extent of view, we may stand above the speaker, or below him; but in either case, his words, if they are earnest and sincere, will find some response within us; for in spite of all casual varieties in outward rank or inward, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.

This may appear a very simple principle, and one which Burns had little merit in discovering. True, the discovery is

easy enough: but the practical appliance is not easy; is indeed the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with, and which scarcely one in the hundred ever fairly surmounts. A head too dull to discriminate the true from the false; a heart too dull to love the one at all risks, and to hate the other in spite of all temptations, are alike fatal to a writer. With either, or as more commonly happens, with both of these deficiencies combine a love of distinction, a wish to be original, which is seldom wanting, and we have Affectation, the bane of literature, as Cant, its elder brother, is of morals. How often does the one and the other front us, in poetry, as in life! Great poets themselves are not always free of this vice; nay, it is precisely on a certain sort and degree of greatness that it is most commonly ingrafted. A strong effort after excellence will sometimes solace itself with a mere shadow of success; he who has much to unfold, will sometimes unfold it imperfectly. Byron, for instance, was no common man: yet if we examine his poetry with this view, we shall find it far enough from faultless. Generally speaking, we should say that it is not true. He refreshes us, not with the divine fountain, but too often with vulgar strong waters, stimulating indeed to the taste, but soon ending in dislike, or even nausea. Are his Harolds and Giaours, we would ask, real men; we mean, poetically consistent and conceivable men? Do not these characters, does not the character of their author, which more or less shines through them all, rather appear a thing put on for the occasion; no natural or possible mode of being, but something intended to look much grander than nature? Surely, all these stormful agonies, this volcanic heroism, superhuman contempt and moody desperation, with so much scowling, and teeth-gnashing, and other sulphurous humour, is more like the brawling of a player in some paltry tragedy, which is to last three hours, than the bearing of a man in the business of life, which is to last threescore and ten years. To our minds there is a taint of this sort, something which we should call theatrical, false, affected, in every one of these otherwise so powerful pieces. Perhaps *Don Juan*, especially the latter parts of it, is the only thing approaching to a *sincere* work, he ever wrote; the only work where he showed himself, in any measure, as he was; and seemed so intent on his subject as, for moments, to forget himself. Yet Byron hated this vice; we believe, heartily detested it: nay he had declared formal war against it in words. So difficult is it even for the strongest to make this primary attainment, which might seem the simplest of all: to *read its own consciousness without mistakes*, without errors involuntary or wilful! We recollect no poet of Burns's susceptibility who comes before us from the first, and abides with us to the last, with such a total want of affectation. He is an honest man, and an honest writer. In his successes and his failures, in his greatness and his littleness, he is ever clear, simple, true, and glitters with no lustre but his own. We reckon this to be a great virtue; to be, in fact, the root of most other virtues, literary as well as moral.

Here, however, let us say, it is to the poetry of Burns that we now allude; to those writings which he had time to meditate, and where no special reason existed to warp his critical feeling, or obstruct his endeavour to fulfil it. Certain of his Letters, and other fractions of prose composition, by no means deserve this praise. Here, doubtless, there is not the same natural truth of style; but on the contrary, something not only stiff, but strained and twisted; a certain high-flown inflated tone; the stilted emphasis of which contrasts ill with the firmness and rugged simplicity of even his poorest verses. Thus no man, it would appear, is altogether unaffected. Does not Shakespeare himself sometimes premeditate the sheerest bombast! But even with regard to these Letters of Burns, it is but fair to state that he had two excuses. The first was his comparative deficiency in language. Burns, though for most part he writes with singular force and even gracefulness, is not master of English prose, as he is of Scotch verse; not master of it, we mean, in proportion to the depth and vehemence of his matter. These Letters strike us as the effort of a man to express something which he has no organ fit for expressing. But a second and weightier excuse is to be found in the peculiarity of Burns's social rank. His correspondents are often men whose relation to him he has never accurately ascertained; whom therefore he is either forearming himself against, or else unconsciously flattering, by adopting the style he thinks

will please them. At all events, we should remember that these faults, even in his Letters, are not the rule, but the exception. Whenever he writes, as one would ever wish to do, to trusted friends and on real interests, his style becomes simple, vigorous, expressive, sometimes even beautiful. His letters to Mrs. Dunlop are uniformly excellent.

But we return to his Poetry. In addition to its Sincerity, it has another peculiar merit, which indeed is but a mode, or perhaps a means, of the foregoing: this displays itself in his choice of subjects; or rather in his indifference as to subjects, and the power he has of making all subjects interesting. The ordinary poet, like the ordinary man, is for ever seeking in external circumstances the help which can be found only in himself. In what is familiar and near at hand, he discerns no form or comeliness: home is not poetical but prosaic; it is in some past, distant, conventional heroic world, that poetry resides; were he there and not here, were he thus and not so, it would be well with him. Hence our innumerable host of rose-coloured Novels and iron-mailed Epics, with their locality not on the Earth, but somewhere nearer to the Moon. Hence our Virgins of the Sun, and our Knights of the Cross, malicious Saracens in turbans, and copper-coloured Chiefs in wampum, and so many other truculent figures from the heroic times or the heroic climates, who on all hands swarm in our poetry. Peace be with them! But yet, as a great moralist proposed preaching to the men of this century, so would we fain preach to the poets, 'a sermon on the duty of staying at home.' Let them be sure that heroic ages and heroic climates can do little for them. That form of life has attraction for us, less because it is better or nobler than our own, than simply because it is different; and even this attraction must be of the most transient sort. For will not our own age, one day, be an ancient one; and have as quaint a costume as the rest; not contrasted with the rest, therefore, but ranked along with them, in respect of quaintness? Does Homer interest us now, because he wrote of what passed beyond his native Greece, and two centuries before he was born; or because he wrote what passed in God's world, and in the heart of man, which is the same after thirty centuries? Let our poets look to this: is their feeling really finer, truer, and their vision deeper than that of other men,—they have nothing to fear, even from the humblest subject; is it not so,—they have nothing to hope, but an ephemeral favour, even from the highest.

The poet, we imagine, can never have far to seek for a subject: the elements of his art are in him, and around him on every hand; for him the Ideal world is not remote from the Actual, but under it and within it: nay, he is a poet, precisely because he can discern it there. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place; for here too is man's existence, with its infinite longings and small acquirings; its ever-thwarted, ever-renewed endeavours; its unspeakable aspirations, its fears and hopes that wander through Eternity; and all the mystery of brightness and of gloom that it was ever made of, in any age or climate, since man first began to live. Is there not the fifth act of a Tragedy in every deathbed, though it were a peasant's, and a bed of heath? And are wooings and weddings obsolete, that there can be Comedy no longer? Or are men suddenly grown wise, that Laughter must no longer shake his sides, but be cheated of his Farce? Man's life and nature is, as it was, and as it will ever be. But the poet must have an eye to read these things, and a heart to understand them; or they come and pass away before him in vain. He is a *vates*, a seer; a gift of vision has been given him. Has life no meanings for him, which another cannot equally decipher? then he is no poet, and Delphi itself will not make him one.

In this respect, Burns, though not perhaps absolutely a great poet, better manifests his capability, better proves the truth of his genius, than if he had by his own strength kept the whole Minerva Press going, to the end of his literary course. He shows himself at least a poet of Nature's own making; and Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. We often hear of this and the other external condition being requisite for the existence of a poet. Sometimes it is a certain sort of training; he must have studied certain things, studied for instance 'the elder dramatists,' and so learned a poetic language; as if poetry lay in the tongue, not in the heart. At other times we are told he must be bred in a certain rank, and must be on a confidential footing with the

higher classes; because, above all things, he must see the world. As to seeing the world, we apprehend this will cause him little difficulty, if he have but eyesight to see it with. Without eyesight, indeed, the task might be hard. The blind or the purling man 'travels from Dan to Beersheba, and finds it all barren.' But happily every poet is born in the world; and sees it, with eyes against his will, every day and every hour he lives. The mysterious workmanship of man's heart, the true light and the inscrutable darkness of man's destiny, reveal themselves not only in capitals and crowded saloons, but in every hut and hamlet where men have their abode. Nay, do not the elements of all human virtues and all human vices; the passions at once of a Borgia and of a Luther, lie written, in stronger or fainter lines, in the consciousness of every individual bosom, that has practised honest self-examination? Truly, this same world may be seen in Mosses and Tarbolton, if we look well, as clearly as it ever came to light in Crockford's, or the Tuileries itself.

But sometimes still harder requisitions are laid on the poet aspirant to poetry; for it is hinted that he should have *been born* two centuries ago; inasmuch as poetry, about that date, vanished from the earth, and became no longer attainable by men! Such cobweb speculations have, now and then, overhung the field of literature; but they obstruct not the growth of any plant there: the Shakespeare or the Burns, unconsciously and merely as he walks onward, silently brushes them away. Is not every genius an impossibility till he appear? Why do we call him new and original, if we saw where his marble was lying, and what fabric he could rear from it? It is not the material but the workman that is wanting. It is not the dark *place* that hinders, but the *dim eye*. A Scottish peasant's life was the meanest and rudest of all lives, till Burns became a poet in it, and a poet of it; found it a *man's* life, and therefore significant to men. A thousand battlefields remain unsung; but the *Wounded Hare* has not perished without its memorial; a balm of mercy yet breathes on us from its dumb agonies, because a poet was there. Our *Halloween* had passed and repassed, in rude awe and laughter since the era of the Druids; but no Theocritus, till Burns, discerned in it the materials of a Scottish Idyl: neither was the *Holy Fair* any *Council of Trent* or *Roman Jubilee*; but nevertheless, *Superstition* and *Hypocrisy* and *Fun* having been propitious to him, in this man's hand it became a poem, instinct with satire and genuine comic life. Let but the true poet be given us, we repeat it, place him where and how you will, and true poetry will not be wanting.

Independently of the essential gift of poetic feeling, as we have now attempted to describe it, a certain rugged sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written; a virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life and hardy natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a sweet native gracefulness: he is tender, he is vehement, yet without constraint or too visible effort; he melts the heart, or inflames it, with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness the force and passionate ardour of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feeling; the high and the low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful are welcome in their turns to his 'lightly-moved and all-comprehending spirit.' And observe with what a fierce prompt force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were the full image of the matter in his eye; full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! Is it of reason; some truth to be discovered? No sophistry, no vain surface-logic detains him; quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces through into the marrow of the question; and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description; some visual object to be represented? No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance; three lines from his hand and we have a likeness. And, in that rough dialect in that rude, often awkward metre, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman working with a burnt stick; and yet the burin of a Retzsch is not more expressive or exact.

Of this last excellence, the plainest and most comprehensive of all, being indeed the root and foundation of every sort of talent, poetical or intellectual, we could produce innumerable instances from the writings of Burns. Take these glimpses of a snow-storm from his *Winter Night* (the italics are ours):

When biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r,
And Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glow
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r
Or whirling drift:

'Ae night the storm the steeples rock'd,
Poor labour sweet in sleep was lock'd,
While burns wi' snawy wreaths upchok'd
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or thro' the mining outlet bock'd
Down headlong hurl.

Are there not 'descriptive touches' here? The describer *saw* this thing; the essential feature and true likeness of every circumstance in it; saw, and not with the eye only. 'Poor labour locked in sweet sleep;' the dead stillness of man, unconscious, vanquished, yet not unprotected, while such strife of the material elements rages, and seems to reign supreme in loneliness: this is of the heart as well as of the eye!—Look also at his image of a thaw, and prophesied fall of the *Auld Brig*:

When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains
Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil,
Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
Or haunted Garpal* draws his feeble source,
Arous'd by blust'ring winds and spotting thowes,
In many a torrent down his snaw-broo rows;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring speat,
Sweeps dams and mills and brigs a' to the gate;
And from Glenbuck down to the Rottonkey,
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd tumbling sea;
Then down ye'll hurl, Deil nor ye never rise!
And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.

The last line is in itself a Poussin-picture of that Deluge! The welkin has, as it were, bent down with its weight; the 'gumlie jaups' and the 'pouring skies' are mingled together; it is a world of rain and ruin.—In respect of mere clearness and minute fidelity, the *Farmer's* commendation of his *Auld Mare*, in plough or in cart, may vie with Homer's Smithy of the Cyclops, or yoking of Priam's Chariot. Nor have we forgotten stout *Burn-the-wind* and his brawny customers, inspired by *Scotch Drink*: but it is needless to multiply examples. One other trait of a much finer sort we select from multitudes of such among his *Songs*. It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling the saddest environment and local habitation:

The pale Moon is setting beyond the white wave,
And time is setting wi' me, O;
Farewell, false friends! false lover, farewell!
I'll nae mair trouble them nor thee, O.

This clearness of sight we have called the foundation of all talent; for in fact, unless we see our object, how shall we know how to place or prize it, in our understanding, our imagination, our affections? Yet it is not in itself, perhaps, a very high excellence; but capable of being united indifferently with the strongest, or with ordinary power. Homer surpasses all men in this quality: but strangely enough, at no great distance below him are Richardson and Defoe. It belongs, in truth, to what is called a lively mind; and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases we have mentioned, it is combined with great garrulity; their descriptions are detailed, ample and lovingly exact; Homer's fire bursts through, from time to time, as if by accident; but Defoe and Richardson have no fire. Burns, again, is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions. Of the strength, the piercing emphasis with which he thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his; words more

memorable, now by their burning vehemence, now by their cool vigour and laconic pith? A single phrase depicts a whole subject, a whole scene. We hear of 'a gentleman that derived his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God.' Our Scottish forefathers in the battlefield struggled forward '*red-wat-shod*;' in this one word, a full vision of horror and carnage, perhaps too frightfully accurate for Art!

In fact, one of the leading features in the mind of Burns is this vigour of his strictly intellectual perceptions. A resolute force is ever visible in his judgments, and in his feelings and volitions. Professor Stewart says of him, with some surprise: 'All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities.' But this, if we mistake not, is at all times the very essence of a truly poetical endowment. Poetry, except in such cases as that of Keats, where the whole consists in a weak-eyed maudlin sensibility, and a certain vague random tune-fulness of nature, is no separate faculty, no organ which can be superadded to the rest, or disjoined from them; but rather the result of their general harmony and completion. The feelings, the gifts that exist in the Poet are those that exist, with more or less development, in every human soul: the imagination, which shudders at the Hell of Dante, is the same faculty, weaker in degree, which called that picture into being. How does the Poet speak to men, with power, but by being still more a man than they? Shakespeare, it has been well observed, in the planning and completing of his tragedies, has shown an understanding, were it nothing more, which might have governed states, or indited a *Novum Organum*. What Burns's force of understanding may have been, we have less means of judging: it had to dwell among the humblest objects; never saw Philosophy; never rose, except by natural effort and for short intervals, into the region of great ideas. Nevertheless, sufficient indication, if no proof sufficient, remains for us in his works: we discern the brawny movements of a gigantic though untutored strength; and can understand how, in conversation, his quick sure insight into men and things may, as much as aught else about him, have amazed the best thinkers of his time and country.

But, unless we mistake, the intellectual gift of Burns is fine as well as strong. The more delicate relations of things could not well have escaped his eye, for they were intimately present to his heart. The logic of the senate and the forum is indispensable, but not all-sufficient; nay perhaps the highest Truth is that which will the most certainly elude it. For this logic works by words, and 'the highest,' it has been said, 'cannot be expressed in words.' We are not without tokens of an openness for this higher truth also, of a keen though uncultivated sense for it, having existed in Burns. Mr. Stewart, it will be remembered, 'wonders,' in the passage above quoted, that Burns had formed some distinct conception of the 'doctrine of association.' We rather think that far subtler things than the doctrine of association had from of old been familiar to him. Here for instance:

'We know nothing,' thus writes he, 'or next to nothing, of the structure of our souls, so we cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never heard the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the *Æolian* harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident; or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities: a God that made all things, man's immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or wo beyond death and the grave.'

Force and fineness of understanding are often spoken of as something different from general force and fineness of nature, as something partly independent of them. The necessities of

* *Fabulosus Hydaspes!*

language so require it; but in truth these qualities are not distinct and independent: except in special cases, and from special causes, they ever go together. A man of strong understanding is generally a man of strong character; neither is delicacy in the one kind often divided from delicacy in the other. No one, at all events, is ignorant that in the Poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling; that his *light* is not more pervading than his *warmth*. He is a man of the most impassioned temper; with passions not strong only, but noble, and of the sort in which great virtues and great poems take their rise. It is reverence, it is love towards all Nature that inspires him, that opens his eyes to its beauty, and makes heart and voice eloquent in its praise. There is a true old saying, that 'Love furthers knowledge:' but above all, it is the living essence of that knowledge which makes poets; the first principle of its existence, increase, activity. Of Burns's fervid affection, his generous all-embracing Love, we have spoken already, as of the grand distinction of his nature, seen equally in word and deed, in his Life and in his Writings. It were easy to multiply examples. Not man only, but all that environs man in the material and moral universe, is lovely in his sight: 'the hoary hawthorn,' the 'troop of gray plover,' the 'solitary curlew,' all are dear to him; all live in this Earth along with him, and to all he is knit as in mysterious brotherhood. How touching is it, for instance, that, amidst the gloom of personal misery, brooding over the wintry desolation without him and within him, he thinks of the 'ourie cattle' and 'silly sheep,' and their sufferings in the pitiless storm!

I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' wintry war,
Or thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,
Beneath a scaur.
Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing,
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Where wilt thou cow'r thy chattering wing?
And close thy ee?

The tenant of the mean hut, with its 'ragged roof and chinky wall,' has a heart to pity even these! This is worth several homilies on Mercy; for it is the voice of Mercy herself. Burns, indeed, lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all realms of being; nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him. The very Devil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy:

But fare ye weel, auld Nickie-ben;
O, wad ye tak a thought and men!
Ye aiblins might,—I dinna ken,—
Still hae a stake;
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Even for your sake!

'He is the father of curses and lies,' said Dr. Slop; 'and is cursed and damned already.'—'I am sorry for it,' quoth my uncle Toby!—a Poet without Love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility.

But has it not been said, in contradiction to this principle, that 'Indignation makes verses'? It has been so said, and is true enough: but the contradiction is apparent, not real. The Indignation which makes verses is, properly speaking, an inverted Love; the love of some right, some worth, some goodness, belonging to ourselves or others, which has been injured, and which this tempestuous feeling issues forth to defend and avenge. No selfish fury of heart, existing there as a primary feeling, and without its opposite, ever produced much Poetry: otherwise, we suppose, the Tiger were the most musical of all our choristers. Johnson said, he loved a good hater; by which he must have meant, not so much one that hated violently, as one that hated wisely; hated baseness from love of nobleness. However, in spite of Johnson's paradox, tolerable enough for once in speech, but which need not have been so often adopted in print since then, we rather believe that good men deal sparingly in hatred, either wise or unwise: nay that a 'good' hater is still a desideratum in this world. The Devil, at least, who passes for the chief and best of that class, is said to be nowise an amiable character.

Of the verses which Indignation makes, Burns has also given us specimens: and among the best that were ever given. Who

will forget his '*Dweller in yon Dungeon dark*;' a piece that might have been chanted by the Furies of Æschylus? The secrets of the infernal Pit are laid bare; a boundless baleful 'darkness visible;' and streaks of hell-fire quivering madly in its black haggard bosom!

Dweller in yon Dungeon dark,
Hangman of Creation, mark!
Who in widow's weeds appears,
Laden with unhonoured years,
Noosing with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse!

Why should we speak of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*; since all know of it, from the king to the meanest of his subjects? This dithyrambic was composed on horseback; in riding in the middle of tempests, over the wildest Galloway moor, in company with a Mr. Syme, who, observing the poet's looks, forbore to speak,—judiciously enough, for a man composing *Bruce's Address* might be unsafe to trifle with. Doubtless this stern hymn was singing itself, as he formed it, through the soul of Burns; but to the external ear, it should be sung with the throat of the whirlwind. So long as there is warm blood in the heart of Scotchman or man, it will move in fierce thrills under this war-ode; the best, we believe, that was ever written by any pen.

Another wild stormful Song, that dwells in our ear and mind with a strange tenacity, is *Macpherson's Farewell*. Perhaps there is something in the tradition itself that co-operates. For was not this grim Celt, this shaggy Northland Cacus, that 'lived a life of sturt and strife, and died by treachery,'—was not he too one of the Nimrods and Napoleons of the earth, in the arena of his own remote misty glens, for want of a clearer and wider one? Nay, was there not a touch of grace given him? A fibre of love and softness, of poetry itself, must have lived in his savage heart: for he composed that air the night before his execution; on the wings of that poor melody his better soul would soar away above oblivion, pain and all the ignominy and despair, which, like an avalanche, was hurling him to the abyss! Here also, as at Thebes, and in Pelops' line, was material Fate matched against man's Free-will; matched in bitterest though obscure duel; and the ethereal soul sank not, even in its blindness, without a cry which has survived it. But who, except Burns, could have given words to such a soul; words that we never listen to without a strange half-barbarous, half-poetic fellow-feeling?

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallow's-tree.

Under a lighter disguise, the same principle of Love, which we have recognised as the great characteristic of Burns, and of all true poets, occasionally manifests itself in the shape of Humour. Everywhere, indeed, in his sunny moods, a full buoyant flood of mirth rolls through the mind of Burns; he rises to the high, and stoops to the low, and is brother and playmate to all Nature. We speak not of his bold and often irresistible faculty of caricature; for this is Drollery rather than Humour: but a much tenderer sportfulness dwells in him; and comes forth here and there, in evanescent and beautiful touches; as in his *Address to the Mouse*, or the *Farmer's Mare*, or in his *Elegy on poor Mailie*, which last may be reckoned his happiest effort of this kind. In these pieces there are traits of a Humour as fine as that of Sterne; yet altogether different, original, peculiar,—the Humour of Burns.

Of the tenderness, the playful pathos, and many other kindred qualities of Burns's Poetry, much more might be said; but now, with these poor outlines of a sketch, we must prepare to quit this part of our subject. To speak of his individual Writings, adequately and with any detail, would lead us far beyond our limits. As already hinted, we can look on but few of these pieces as, in strict critical language, deserving the name of Poems: they are rhymed eloquence, rhymed pathos, rhymed sense; yet seldom essentially melodious, aerial, poetical. *Tam o' Shanter* itself, which enjoys so high a favour, does not appear to us at all decisively to come under this last category. It is not so much a poem, as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart and

body of the story still lies hard and dead. He has not gone back, much less carried us back, into that dark, earnest, wondering age, when the tradition was believed, and when it took its rise; he does not attempt, by any new-modelling of his supernatural ware, to strike anew that deep mysterious chord of human nature, which once responded to such things; and which lives in us too, and will forever live, though silent now, or vibrating with far other notes, and to far different issues. Our German readers will understand us, when we say, that he is not the Tieck but the Musæus of this tale. Externally it is all green and living; yet look closer, it is no firm growth, but only ivy on a rock. The piece does not properly cohere: the strange chasm which yawns in our incredulous imaginations between the Ayr publichouse and the gate of Tophet, is nowhere bridged over, nay the idea of such a bridge is laughed at; and thus the Tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken phantasmagoria, or many-coloured spectrum painted on ale-vapours, and the Farce alone has any reality. We do not say that Burns should have made much more of this tradition; we rather think that, for strictly poetical purposes, not much *was* to be made of it. Neither are we blind to the deep, varied, genial power displayed in what he has actually accomplished; but we find far more 'Shakespearean' qualities, as these of *Tam o' Shanter* have been fondly named, in many of his other pieces; nay we incline to believe that this latter might have been written, all but quite as well, by a man who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent.

Perhaps we may venture to say, that the most strictly poetical of all his 'poems' is one which does not appear in Currie's Edition; but has been often printed before and since, under the humble title of *The Jolly Beggars*. The subject truly is among the lowest in Nature; but it only the more shows our Poet's gift in raising it into the domain of Art. To our minds, this piece seems thoroughly compacted; melted together, refined; and poured forth in one flood of true liquid harmony. It is light, airy, soft of movement; yet sharp and precise in its details; every face is a portrait: that *raucle carlin*, that *wee Apollo*, that *Son of Mars*, are Scottish, yet ideal; the scene is at once a dream, and the very Ragcastle of 'Poosie-Nansie.' Farther, it seems in a considerable degree complete, a real self-supporting Whole, which is the highest merit in a poem. The blanket of the Night is drawn asunder for a moment; in full, ruddy, flaming light, these rough tatterdemalions are seen in their boisterous revel; for the strong pulse of Life vindicates its right to gladness even here; and when the curtain closes, we prolong the action, without effort; the next day as the last, our *Cuir'd* and our *Balladmonger* are singing and soldiering; their 'brats and callets' are hawking, begging, cheating; and some other night, in new combinations, they will wring from Fate another hour of wassail and good cheer. Apart from the universal sympathy with man which this again bespeaks in Burns, a genuine inspiration and no inconsiderable technical talent are manifested here. There is the fidelity, humour, warm life and accurate painting and grouping of some Teniers, for whom hostlers and carousing peasants are not without significance. It would be strange, doubtless, to call this the best of Burns's writings: we mean to say only, that it seems to us the most perfect of its kind, as a piece of poetical composition, strictly so called. In the *Beggars' Opera*, in the *Beggars' Bush*, as other critics have already remarked, there is nothing which, in real poetic vigour, equals this *Cantata*; nothing, as we think, which comes within many degrees of it.

But by far the most finished, complete and truly inspired pieces of Burns are, without dispute, to be found among his *Songs*. It is here that, although through a small aperture, his light shines with least obstruction; in its highest beauty and pure sunny clearness. The reason may be, that Song is a brief simple species of composition; and requires nothing so much for its perfection as genuine poetic feeling, genuine music of heart. Yet the Song has its rules equally with the Tragedy; rules which in most cases are poorly fulfilled, in many cases are not so much as felt. We might write a long essay on the Songs of Burns; which we reckon by far the best that Britain has yet produced: for indeed, since the era of Queen Elizabeth, we know

not that, by any other hand, aught truly worth attention has been accomplished in this department. True, we have songs enough 'by persons of quality;' we have tawdry, hollow, wine-bred madrigals; many a rhymed speech 'in the flowing and watery vein of Ossorius the Portugal Bishop,' rich in sonorous words, and, for moral, dashed perhaps with some tint of a sentimental sensuality; all which many persons cease not from endeavouring to sing; though for most part, we fear, the music is but from the throat outwards, or at best from some region far enough short of the *Soul*; not in which, but in a certain inane Limbo of the Fancy, or even in some vaporous debateable-land on the outskirts of the Nervous System, most of such madrigals and rhymed speeches seem to have originated.

With the Songs of Burns we must not name these things. Independently of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades his poetry, his Songs are honest in another point of view: in form, as well as in spirit. They do not *affect* to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music; they have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of Harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. The story, the feeling, is not detailed, but suggested; not *said*, or spouted, in rhetorical completeness and coherence; but *sung*, in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings* not of the voice only, but of the whole mind. We consider this to be the essence of a song; and that no songs since the little careless catches, and as it were drops of song, which Shakespeare has here and there sprinkled over his Plays, fulfil this condition in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do. Such grace and truth of external movement, too, presupposes in general a corresponding force and truth of sentiment and inward meaning. The Songs of Burns are not more perfect in the former quality than in the latter. With what tenderness he sings, yet with what vehemence and entireness! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy; he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or sliest mirth; and yet he is sweet and soft, 'sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft as their parting tear.' If we farther take into account the immense variety of his subjects; how, from the loud flowing revel in *Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut*, to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness of *Mary in Heaven*; from the glad kind greeting of *Auld Langsyne*, or the comic archness of *Duncan Gray*, to the fire-eyed fury of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*, he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart,—it will seem a small praise if we rank him as the first of all our Song-writers; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

It is on his Songs, as we believe, that Burns's chief influence as an author will ultimately be found to depend: nor, if our Fletcher's aphorism is true, shall we account this a small influence. 'Let me make the songs of a people,' said he, 'and you shall make its laws.' Surely, if ever any Poet might have equalled himself with Legislators on this ground, it was Burns. His Songs are already part of the mother-tongue, not of Scotland only but of Britain, and of the millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many-coloured joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice* of that joy and that woe, is the name and voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps no British man has so deeply affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men, as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest.

In another point of view, moreover, we incline to think that Burns's influence may have been considerable: we mean, as exerted specially on the Literature of his country, at least on the Literature of Scotland. Among the great changes which British, particularly Scottish literature, has undergone since that period, one of the greatest will be found to consist in its remarkable increase of nationality. Even the English writers most popular in Burns's time were little distinguished for their literary patriotism, in this its best sense. A certain attenuated cosmopolitanism had, in good measure, taken place of the old insular home-feeling; literature was, as it were, without any local environment; was not nourished by the affections which spring from a native soil. Our Grays and Glovers seemed to write almost as if *in vacuo*; the thing written bears no mark of place; it is not written so much for Englishmen, as for men; or rather, which is the *inimitable*

able result of this, for certain Generalisations which philosophy termed men. Goldsmith is an exception: not so Johnson; the scene of his *Rambler* is little more English than that of his *Rasselas*.

But if such was, in some degree, the case with England, it was, in the highest degree, the case with Scotland. In fact our Scottish literature had, at that period, a very singular aspect; unexampled, so far as we know, except perhaps at Geneva, where the same state of matters appears still to continue. For a long period after Scotland became British, we had no literature; at the date when Addison and Steele were writing their *Spectators*, our good John Boston was writing, with the noblest intent, but alike in defiance of grammar and philosophy, his *Fourfold State of Man*. Then came the schisms in our National Church, and the fiercer schisms in our Body Politic: Theologic ink, and Jacobite blood, with gall enough in both cases, seemed to have blotted out the intellect of the country: however, it was only obscured, not obliterated. Lord Kames made nearly the first attempt at writing English; and ere long, Hume, Robertson, Smith, and a whole host of followers, attracted hither the eyes of all Europe. And yet in this brilliant resuscitation of our 'fervid genius,' there was nothing truly Scottish, nothing indigenous; except, perhaps, the natural impetuosity of intellect, which we sometimes claim, and are sometimes unbraided with, as a characteristic of our nation. It is curious to remark that Scotland, so full of writers, had no Scottish culture, nor indeed any English; our culture was almost exclusively French. It was by studying Racine and Voltaire, Batteux and Boileau, that Kames had trained himself to be a critic and philosopher; it was the light of Montesquieu and Mably that guided Robertson in his political speculations; Quesnay's lamp that kindled the lamp of Adam Smith. Hume was too rich a man to borrow; and perhaps he reacted on the French more than he was acted on by them. but neither had he aught to do with Scotland; Edinburgh, equally with La Flèche, was but the lodging and laboratory, in which he not so much morally *lived*, as metaphysically *investigated*. Never, perhaps, was there a class of writers so clear and well-ordered, yet so totally destitute, to all appearance, of any patriotic affection, nay of any human affection whatever. The French wits of the period were as unpatriotic: but their general deficiency in moral principle, not to say their avowed sensuality and unbelief in all virtue, strictly so called, render this accountable enough. We hope there is a patriotism founded on something better than prejudice; that our country may be dear to us, without injury to our philosophy; that in loving and justly prizing all other lands, we may prize justly, and yet love before all others, our own stern Motherland, and the venerable Structure of social and moral Life, which Mind has through long ages been building up for us there. Surely there is nourishment for the better part of man's heart in all this: surely the roots, that have fixed themselves in the very core of man's being, may be so cultivated as to grow up not into briars, but into roses, in the field of his life! Our Scottish sages have no such propensities: the field of their life shows neither briars nor roses; but only a flat, continuous thrashing-floor for Logic, whereon all questions, from the 'Doctrine of Rent' to the 'Natural History of Religion,' are thrashed and sifted with the same mechanical impartiality!

With Sir Walter Scott at the head of our literature, it cannot be denied that much of this evil is past, or rapidly passing away: our chief literary men, whatever other faults they may have, no longer live among us like a French Colony, or some knot of Propaganda Missionaries; but like natural-born subjects of the soil, partaking and sympathising in all our attachments, humours, and habits. Our literature no longer grows in water but in mould, and with the true racy virtues of the soil and climate. How much of this change may be due to Burns, or to any other individual, it might be difficult to estimate. Direct literary imitation of Burns was not to be looked for. But his example, in the fearless adoption of domestic subjects, could not but operate from afar; and certainly in no heart did the love of country ever burn with a warmer glow than in that of Burns: 'a tide of Scottish prejudice,' as he modestly calls this deep and generous feeling, 'had been poured along his veins; and he felt that it would boil there till the flood-gates shut in eternal rest.' It seemed to him, as if he could do so little for his country, and yet would so gladly have done all.

One small province stood open for him,—that of Scottish Song and how eagerly he entered on it, how devotedly he laboured there! In his toilsome journeyings, this object never quits him: it is the little happy-valley of his careworn heart. In the gloom of his own affliction, he eagerly searches after some lonely brother of the muse, and rejoices to snatch one other name from the oblivion that was covering it! These were early feelings, and they abode with him to the end:

. . . A wish (I mind its power),
A wish, that to my latest hour
Will strongly heave my breast,—
That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some useful plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least.

The rough bur Thistle spreading wide
Among the bearded bear,
I turn'd my weeding-clips aside,
And spared the symbol dear.

But to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long. Far more interesting than any of his written works, as it appears to us, are his acted ones: the Life he willed and was fated to lead among his fellow-men. These Poems are but like little rhymed fragments scattered here and there in the grand unrhymed Romance of his earthly existence; and it is only when intercalated in this at their proper places, that they attain their full measure of significance. And this, too, alas! was but a fragment! The plan of a mighty edifice had been sketched: some columns, porticos, firm masses of building, stand completed: the rest more or less clearly indicated; with many a far-stretching tendency, which only studious and friendly eyes can now trace towards the purposed termination. For the work is broken off in the middle, almost in the beginning; and rises among us, beautiful and sad, at once unfinished and a ruin! If charitable judgment was necessary in estimating his Poems, and justice required that the aim and the manifest power to fulfil it must often be accepted for the fulfilment; much more is this the case in regard to his Life, the sum and result of all his endeavours, where his difficulties came upon him not in detail only, but in mass; and so much has been left unaccomplished, nay was mistaken, and altogether marred.

Properly speaking, there is but one era in the life of Burns, and that the earliest. We have not youth and manhood, but only youth: for, to the end, we discern no decisive change in the complexion of his character; in his thirty-seventh year, he is still, as it were, in youth. With all that resoluteness of judgment, that penetrating insight, and singular maturity of intellectual power, exhibited in his writings, he never attains to any clearness regarding himself; to the last, he never ascertains his peculiar aim, even with such distinctness as is common among ordinary men; and therefore never can pursue it with that singleness of will which insures success and some contentment to such men. To the last, he wavers between two purposes: glorying in his talent, like a true poet, he yet cannot consent to make this his chief and sole glory, and to follow it as the one thing needful, through poverty or riches, through good or evil report. Another far meaner ambition still cleaves to him; he must dream and struggle about a certain 'Rock of Independence;' which, natural and even admirable as it might be, was still but a warring with the world, on the comparatively insignificant ground of his being more completely or less completely supplied with money than others; of his standing at a higher or at a lower altitude in general estimation than others. For the world still appears to him, as to the young, in borrowed colours; he expects from it what it cannot give to any man; seeks for contentment, not within himself, in action and wise effort, but from without, in the kindness of circumstances, in love, friendship, honour, pecuniary ease. He would be happy, not actively and in himself, but passively and from some ideal cornucopia of Enjoyments, not earned by his own labour, but showered on him by the beneficence of Destiny. Thus, like a young man, he cannot gird himself up for any worthy well-calculated goal, but swerves to and fro, between passionate hope and remorseful disappointment: rushing onward with a deep tempestuous force, he surmounts or breaks asunder many a barrier; travels, nay advances far, but advancing only under uncertain guidance, is ever and anon turned from his path.

and to the last cannot reach the only true happiness of a man, that of clear decided Activity in the sphere for which, by nature and circumstances, he has been fitted and appointed.

We do not say these things in dispraise of Burns; nay, perhaps, they but interest us the more in his favour. This blessing is not given soonest to the best; but rather, it is often the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it; for where most is to be developed, most time may be required to develop it. A complex condition had been assigned him from without; as complex a condition from within: no 'pre-established harmony' existed between the clay soil of Mossiel and the empyrean soul of Robert Burns; it was not wonderful that the adjustment between them should have been long postponed, and his arm long cumbered, and his sight confused, in so vast and discordant an economy as he had been appointed steward over. Byron was, at his death, but a year younger than Burns; and through life, as it might have appeared, far more simply situated: yet in him too we can trace no such adjustment, no such moral manhood; but at best, and only a little before his end, the beginning of what seemed such.

By much the most striking incident in Burns's Life is his journey to Edinburgh; but perhaps a still more important one is his residence at Irvine, so early as in his twenty-third year. Hitherto his life had been poor and toilworn; but otherwise not ungenial, and, with all its distresses, by no means unhappy. In his parentage, deducting outward circumstances, he had every reason to reckon himself fortunate. His father was a man of thoughtful, intense, earnest character, as the best of our peasants are; valuing knowledge, possessing some, and, what is far better and rarer, openminded for more: a man with a keen insight and devout heart; reverent towards God, friendly therefore, at once, and fearless towards all that God has made: in one word, though but a hard-handed peasant, a complete and fully unfolded *Man*. Such a father is seldom found in any rank in society; and was worth descending far in society to seek. Unfortunately he was very poor; had he been even a little richer, almost never so little, the whole might have issued far otherwise. Mighty events turn on a straw; the crossing of a brook decides the conquest of the world. Had this William Burns's small seven acres of nursery-ground anywise prospered, the boy Robert had been sent to school; had struggled forward, as so many weaker men do, to some university; come forth not as a rustic wonder, but as a regular well-trained intellectual workman, and changed the whole course of British Literature,—for it lay in him to have done this! But the nursery did not prosper; poverty sank his whole family below the help of even our cheap school-system: Burns remained a hard-worked ploughboy, and British literature took its own course. Nevertheless, even in this rugged scene there is much to nourish him. If he drudges, it is with his brother, and for his father and mother, whom he loves, and would fain shield from want. Wisdom is not banished from their poor hearth, nor the balm of natural feeling: the solemn words, *Let us worship God*, are heard there from a 'priest-like father;' if threatenings of unjust men throw mother and children into tears, these are tears not of grief only, but of holiest affection; every heart in that humble group feels itself the closer knit to every other; in their hard warfare they are there together, a 'little band of brethren.' Neither are such tears, and the deep beauty that dwells in them, their only portion. Light visits the hearts as it does the eyes of all living: there is a force, too, in this youth, that enables him to trample on misfortune; nay to bind it under his feet to make him sport. For a bold, warm, buoyant humour of character has been given him; and so the thick-coming shapes of evil are welcomed with a gay, friendly irony, and in their closest pressure he bates no jot of heart or hope. Vague yearnings of ambition fail not, as he grows up; dreamy fancies hang like cloud-cities around him; the curtain of Existence is slowly rising, in many-coloured splendour and gloom: and the auroral light of first love is gilding his horizon, and the music of song is on his path; and so he walks

. in glory and in joy,
Behind his plough, upon the mountain side.

We ourselves know, from the best evidence, that up to this date Burns was happy; nay that he was the gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating being to be found in the world; more

so even than he ever afterwards appeared. But now, at this early age, he quits the paternal roof; goes forth into looser, louder, more exciting society; and becomes initiated in those dissipations, those vices, which a certain class of philosophers have asserted to be a natural preparative for entering on active life: a kind of mud-bath, in which the youth is, as it were, necessitated to steep, and, we suppose, cleanse himself, before the real toga of Manhood can be laid on him. We shall not dispute much with this class of philosophers; we hope they are mistaken: for Sin and Remorse so easily beset us at all stages of life, and are always such indifferent company, that it seems hard we should, at any stage, be forced and fated not only to meet but to yield to them, and even serve for a term in their leprous armada. We hope it is not so. Clear we are, at all events, it cannot be the training one receives in this Devil's service, but only our determining to desert from it, that fits us for true manly Action. We become men, not after we have been dissipated, and disappointed in the chase of false pleasure; but after we have ascertained, in any way, what impassable barriers hem us in through this life; how mad it is to hope for contentment to our infinite soul from the *gifts* of this extremely finite world; that a man must be sufficient for himself; and that for suffering and enduring there is no remedy but striving and doing. Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with necessity; begins even when we have surrendered to necessity, as the most part only do; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to Necessity; and thus, in reality, triumphed over it, and felt that in Necessity we are free. Surely such lessons as this last, which, in one shape or other, is the grand lesson for every mortal man, are better learned from the lips of a devout mother, in the looks and actions of a devout father, while the heart is yet soft and pliant, than in collision with the sharp adamant of Fate, attracting us to shipwreck us, when the heart is grown hard, and may be broken before it will become contrite. Had Burns continued to learn this, as he was already learning it, in his father's cottage, he would have learned it fully, which he never did; and been saved many a lasting aberration, many a bitter hour and year of remorseful sorrow.

It seems to us another circumstance of fatal import in Burns's history, that at this time too he became involved in the religious quarrels of his district; that he was enlisted and feasted, as the fighting man of the New-Light Priesthood, in their highly unprofitable warfare. At the tables of these freeminded clergy he learned much more than was needful for him. Such liberal ridicule of fanaticism awakened in his mind scruples about Religion itself; and a whole world of Doubts, which it required quite another set of conjurors than these men to exorcise. We do not say that such an intellect as his could have escaped similar doubts at some period of his history; or even that he could, at a later period, have come through them altogether victorious and unharmed: but it seems peculiarly unfortunate that this time, above all others, should have been fixed for the encounter. For now, with principles assailed by evil example from without, by 'passions raging like demons' from within, he had little need of sceptical misgivings to whisper treason in the heat of the battle, or to cut off his retreat if he were already defeated. He loses his feeling of innocence; his mind is at variance with itself; the old divinity no longer presides there; but wild Desires and wild Repentance alternately oppress him. Ere long, too, he has committed himself before the world; his character for sobriety, dear to a Scottish peasant as few corrupted worldlings can even conceive, is destroyed in the eyes of men; and his only refuge consists in trying to disbelieve his guiltiness, and is but a refuge of lies. The blackest desperation now gathers over him, broken only by red lightnings of remorse. The whole fabric of his life is blasted asunder; for now not only his character, but his personal liberty is to be lost; men and Fortune are leagued for his hurt; 'hungry Ruin has him in the wind.' He sees no escape but the saddest of all: exile from his loved country, to a country in every sense inhospitable and abhorrent to him. While the 'gloomy night is gathering fast,' in mental storm and solitude, as well as in physical, he sings his wild farewell to Scotland:

Farewell, my friends! farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those!
The bursting tears my heart declare;
Adieu, my native banks of Ayr!

Light breaks suddenly in on him in floods; but still a false transitory light, and no real sunshine. He is invited to Edinburgh; hastens thither with anticipatory heart; is welcomed as in a triumph, and with universal blandishment and acclamation; whatever is wisest, whatever is greatest or loveliest there, gathers round him, to gaze on his face, to show him honour, sympathy, affection. Burns's appearance among the sages and nobles of Edinburgh must be regarded as one of the most singular phenomena in modern Literature; almost like the appearance of some Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of modern Politics. For it is nowise as 'a mockery king,' set there by favour, transiently and for a purpose, that he will let himself be treated, still less is he a mad Rienzi, whose sudden elevation turns his too weak head; but he stands there on his own basis; cool, unastonished, holding his equal rank from Nature herself; putting forth no claim which there is not strength in him, as well as about him to vindicate. Mr. Lockhart has some forcible observations on this point:

'It needs no effort of imagination,' says he, 'to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation a most thorough conviction, that in the society of the most eminent men of his nation he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bon-mots* of the most celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble,—nay, to tremble visibly,—beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and last, and probably worst of all, who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit, in all likelihood still more daring; often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had ere long no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves.'

The farther we remove from this scene, the more singular will it seem to us: details of the exterior aspect of it are already full of interest. Most readers recollect Mr. Walker's personal interviews with Burns as among the best passages of his Narrative: a time will come when this reminiscence of Sir Walter Scott's, slight though it is, will also be precious:

'As for Burns,' writes Sir Walter, 'I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him: but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner; but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sat silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side,—on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath:

"Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
Perhaps that mother wept her soldier slain;
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
Gave the sad presage of his future years,
The child of misery baptised in tears."

'Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather by the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were; and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's called by the unpromising title of "The Justice of Peace." I whispered my information to a friend present; he mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

'His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture: but to me it conveys

the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I should have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, *i. e.* none of your modern agriculturists who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gude-man* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted; nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognise me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh: but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

'I remember, on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited; and also that, having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models: there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate.

'This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak *in malam partem*, when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station or information more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this.—I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since.'

The conduct of Burns under this dazzling blaze of favour; the calm, unaffected, manly manner in which he not only bore it, but estimated its value, has justly been regarded as the best proof that could be given of his real vigour and integrity of mind. A little natural vanity, some touches of hypocritical modesty, some glimmerings of affectation, at least some fear of being thought affected, we could have pardoned in almost any man; but no such indication is to be traced here. In his unexampled situation the young peasant is not a moment perplexed; so many strange lights do not confuse him, do not lead him astray. Nevertheless, we cannot but perceive that this winter did him great and lasting injury. A somewhat clearer knowledge of men's affairs, scarcely of their characters, it did afford him; but a sharper feeling of Fortune's unequal arrangements in their social destiny it also left with him. He had seen the gay and gorgeous arena, in which the powerful are born to play their parts; nay had himself stood in the midst of it; and he felt more bitterly than ever, that here he was but a looker-on, and had no part or lot in that splendid game. From this time a jealous indignant fear of social degradation takes possession of him; and perverts, so far as aught could pervert, his private contentment, and his feelings towards his richer fellows. It was clear to Burns that he had talent enough to make a fortune, or a hundred fortunes, could he but have rightly willed this; it was clear also that he willed something far different, and therefore could not make one. Unhappy it was that he had not power to choose the one, and reject the other; but must halt forever between two opinions, two objects; making hampered advancement towards either. But so is it with many men: we 'long for the merchandise, yet would fain keep the price;' and so stand chaffering with Fate, in vexatious altercation, till the night come, and our fair is over!

The Edinburgh Learned of that period were in general more noted for clearness of head than for warmth of heart: with the exception of the good old Blacklock, whose help was too ineffectual, scarcely one among them seems to have looked at Burns with any true sympathy, or indeed much otherwise than as at a highly curious thing. By the great also he is treated in the customary fashion; entertained at their tables and dismissed: certain modica of pudding and praise are, from time to time, gladly exchanged for the fascination of his presence; which exchange once effected, the bargain is finished, and each party goes his several way. At the end of this strange season, Burns gloomily sums up his gains and losses, and meditates on the chaotic future. In money he is somewhat richer; in fame and the show of happiness, infinitely richer; but in the substance of it, as poor as ever. Nay poorer; for his heart is now maddened still more with the fever of worldly Ambition; and

through long years the disease will rack him with unprofitable sufferings, and weaken his strength for all true and nobler aims.

What Burns was next to do or to avoid; how a man so circumstanced was now to guide himself towards his true advantage, might at this point of time have been a question for the wisest. It was a question too, which apparently he was left altogether to answer for himself: of his learned or rich patrons it had not struck any individual to turn a thought on this so trivial matter. Without claiming for Burns the praise of perfect sagacity, we must say, that his Excise and Farm scheme does not seem to us a very unreasonable one; that we should be at a loss, even now, to suggest one decidedly better. Certain of his admirers have felt scandalised at his ever resolving to *gaug*; and would have had him lie at the pool, till the spirit of Patronage stirred the waters, that so, with one friendly plunge, all his sorrows might be healed. Unwise counsellors! They know not the manner of this spirit; and how, in the lap of most golden dreams, a man might have happiness, were it not that in the interim he must die of hunger! It reflects credit on the manliness and sound sense of Burns, that he felt so early on what ground he was standing; and preferred self-help, on the humblest scale, to dependence and inaction, though with hope of far more splendid possibilities. But even these possibilities were not rejected in his scheme: he might expect, if it chanced that he had any friend, to rise, in no long period, into something even like opulence and leisure; while again, if it chanced that he had no friend, he could still live in security; and for the rest, he 'did not intend to borrow honour from any profession.' We reckon that his plan was honest and well-calculated: all turned on the execution of it. Doubtless it failed; yet not, we believe, from any vice inherent in itself. Nay, after all, it was no failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. His was no bankruptcy of the purse, but of the soul; to his last day, he owed no man anything.

Meanwhile he begins well: with two good and wise actions. His donation to his mother, munificent from a man whose income had lately been seven pounds a-year, was worthy of him, and not more than worthy. Generous also, and worthy of him, was the treatment of the woman whose life's welfare now depended on his pleasure. A friendly observer might have hoped serene days for him: his mind is on the true road to peace with itself: what clearness he still wants will be given as he proceeds; for the best teacher of duties, that still lie dim to us, is the Practice of those we see and have at hand. Had the 'patrons of genius,' who could give him nothing, but taken nothing from him, at least nothing more! The wounds of his heart would have healed, vulgar ambition would have died away. Toil and Frugality would have been welcome, since Virtue dwelt with them; and Poetry would have shone through them as of old: and in her clear ethereal light, which was his own by birthright, he might have looked down on his earthly destiny, and all its obstructions, not with patience only, but with love.

But the patrons of genius would not have it so. Picturesque tourists,* all manner of fashionable dangles after literature, and, far worse, all manner of convivial Mæcenases, hovered round him in his retreat; and his good as well as his weak qualities secured them influence over him. He was flattered by their notice; and his warm social nature made it impossible for him to shake them off, and hold on his way apart from them. These men, as we believe, were proximately the means of his ruin. Not that they meant him any ill; they only meant themselves a little good; if he suffered harm, let *him* look to it! But they wasted his precious time and his precious talent; they disturbed his composure, broke

* There is one little sketch by certain 'English gentlemen' of this class, which, though adopted in Currie's Narrative, and since then repeated in most others, we have all along felt an invincible disposition to regard as imaginary: 'On a rock that projected into the stream, they saw a man employed in angling, of a singular appearance. He had a cap made of foxskin on his head, a loose greatcoat fixed round him by a belt, from which depended an enormous Highland broad-sword. It was Burns.' Now, we rather think, it was *not* Burns. For, to say nothing of the foxskin cap, the loose and quite Hibernian watchcoat with the belt, what are we to make of this 'enormous Highland broad-sword' depending from him? More especially, as there is no word of parish constables on the outlook to see whether, as Dennis phrases it, he had an eye to his own midriff or that of the public! Burns, of all men, had the least need, and the least tendency, to seek for distinction, either in his own eyes, or those of others by such poor mummeries.

down his returning habits of temperance and assiduous contented exertion. Their pampering was baneful to him; their cruelty, which soon followed, was equally baneful. The old grudge against Fortune's inequality awoke with new bitterness in their neighbourhood; and Burns had no retreat but to 'the Rock of Independence,' which is but an air-castle after all, that looks well at a distance, but will screen no one from real wind and wet. Flushed with irregular excitement, exasperated alternately by contempt of others, and contempt of himself, Burns was no longer regaining his peace of mind, but fast losing it forever. There was a hollowness at the heart of his life, for his conscience did not now approve what he was doing.

Amid the vapours of unwise enjoyment, of bootless remorse, and angry discontent with Fate, his true loadstar, a life of Poetry, with Poverty, nay with Famine if it must be so, was too often altogether hidden from his eyes. And yet he sailed a sea, where without some such loadstar there was no right steering. Meteors of French Politics rise before him, but these were not *his* stars. An accident this, which hastened, but did not originate, his worst distresses. In the mad contentions of that time, he comes in collision with certain official Superiors; is wounded by them; cruelly lacerated, we should say, could a dead mechanical implement, in any case, be called cruel: and shrinks, in indignant pain, into deeper self-seclusion, into gloomier moodiness than ever. His life has now lost its unity: it is a life of fragments; led with little aim, beyond the melancholy one of securing its own continuance,—in fits of wild false joy when such offered, and of black despondency when they passed away. His character before the world begins to suffer: calumny is busy with him; for a miserable man makes more enemies than friends. Some faults he has fallen into, and a thousand misfortunes; but deep criminality is what he stands accused of, and they that are *not* without sin cast the first stone at him! For is he not a well-wisher to the French Revolution, a Jacobin, and therefore in that one act guilty of all? These accusations, political and moral, it has since appeared, were false enough: but the world hesitated little to credit them. Nay his convivial Mæcenases themselves were not the last to do it. There is reason to believe that, in his later years, the Dumfries Aristocracy had partly withdrawn themselves from Burns, as from a tainted person, no longer worthy of their acquaintance. That painful class, stationed, in all provincial cities, behind the outmost breastwork of Gentility, there to stand siege and do battle against the intrusions of Grocerdom and Grazierdom, had actually seen dishonour in the society of Burns, and branded him with their veto; had, as we vulgarly say, *cut* him! We find one passage in this Work of Mr. Lockhart's, which will not out of our thoughts:

'A gentleman of that county, whose name I have already more than once had occasion to refer to, has often told me that he was seldom more grieved, than when riding into Dumfries one fine summer evening about this time to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognise him. The horseman dismounted, and joined Burns, who on his proposing to cross the street said: "Nay, nay, my young friend, that's all over now;" and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad:

"His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
But now he lets 't wear ony way it will hing,
And casts himsell dowie upon the corn-bing.

O, were we young as we ance hae been,
We sud hae been galloping down on yon green,
And linking it over the lily-white lea!
And werena my heart light, I wud die."

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He, immediately after reciting these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably till the hour of the ball arrived.

Alas! when we think that Burns now sleeps 'where bitter indignation can no longer lacerate his heart,* and that most of those fair dames and frizzled gentlemen already lie at his side, where the breastwork of gentility is quite thrown down,—who

* *Ubi sæva indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit.* Swift's Epitaph.

would not sigh over the thin delusions and foolish toys that divide heart from heart, and make man unmerciful to his brother!

It was not now to be hoped that the genius of Burns would ever reach maturity, or accomplish aught worthy of itself. His spirit was jarred in its melody; not the soft breath of natural feeling, but the rude hand of Fate, was now sweeping over the strings. And yet what harmony was in him, what music even in his discords! How the wild tones had a charm for the simplest and the wisest; and all men felt and knew that here also was one of the Gifted! 'If he entered an inn at midnight, after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled!' Some brief pure moments of poetic life were yet appointed him, in the composition of his Songs. We can understand how he grasped at this employment; and how too, he spurned all other reward for it but what the labour itself brought him. For the soul of Burns, though scathed and marred, was yet living in its full moral strength, though sharply conscious of its errors and abasement; and here, in his destitution and degradation, was one act of seeming nobleness and self-devotedness left even for him to perform. He felt too, that with all the 'thoughtless follies' that had 'laid him low,' the world was unjust and cruel to him; and he silently appealed to another and calmer time. Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country: so he cast from him the poor sixpence a-day, and served zealously as a volunteer. Let us not grudge him this last luxury of his existence; let him not have appealed to us in vain! The money was not necessary to him; he struggled through without it: long since, these guineas would have been gone, and now the high-mindedness of refusing them will plead for him in all hearts forever.

We are here arrived at the crisis of Burns's life; for matters had now taken such a shape with him as could not long continue. If improvement was not to be looked for, Nature could only for a limited time maintain this dark and maddening warfare against the world and itself. We are not medically informed whether any continuance of years was, at this period, probable for Burns; whether his death is to be looked on as in some sense an accidental event, or only as the natural consequence of the long series of events that had preceded. The latter seems to be the likelier opinion; and yet it is by no means a certain one. At all events, as we have said, *some* change could not be very distant. Three gates of deliverance, it seems to us, were open for Burns: clear poetical activity; madness; or death. The first, with longer life, was still possible, though not probable; for physical causes were beginning to be concerned in it: and yet Burns had an iron resolution; could he but have seen and felt, that not only his highest glory, but his first duty, and the true medicine for all his woes, lay here. The second was still less probable; for his mind was ever among the clearest and firmest. So the milder third gate was opened for him: and he passed, not softly yet speedily, into that still country, where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!

Contemplating this sad end of Burns, and how he sank unaided by any real help, uncheered by any wise sympathy, generous minds have sometimes figured to themselves, with a reproachful sorrow, that much might have been done for him; that by counsel, true affection and friendly ministrations, he might have been saved to himself and the world. We question whether there is not more tenderness of heart than soundness of judgment in these suggestions. It seems dubious to us whether the richest, wisest, most benevolent individual could have lent Burns any effectual help. Counsel, which seldom profits any one, he did not need; in his understanding, he knew the right from the wrong, as well perhaps as any man ever did; but the persuasion, which would have availed him, lies not so much in the head as in the heart, where no argument or expostulation could have assisted much to implant it. As to money again, we do not believe that this was his essential want; or well see how any private man could, even presupposing Burns's consent, have bestowed on him an independent fortune, with

much prospect of decisive advantage. It is a mortifying truth, that two men in any rank of society, could hardly be found virtuous enough to give money, and to take it as a necessary gift, without injury to the moral entireness of one or both. But so stands the fact: Friendship, in the old heroic sense of that term, no longer exists; except in the cases of kindred or other legal affinity, it is in reality no longer expected, or recognised as a virtue among men. A close observer of manners has pronounced 'Patronage,' that is, pecuniary or other economic furtherance, to be 'twice cursed;' cursing him that gives, and him that takes! And thus, in regard to outward matters also, it has become the rule, as in regard to inward it always was and must be the rule, that no one shall look for effectual help to another; but that each shall rest contented with what help he can afford himself. Such, we say, is the principle of modern Honour; naturally enough growing out of that sentiment of Pride, which we inculcate and encourage as the basis of our whole social morality. Many a poet has been poorer than Burns; but no one was ever prouder: we may question whether, without great precautions, even a pension from Royalty would not have galled and encumbered, more than actually assisted him.

Still less, therefore, are we disposed to join with another class of Burns's admirers, who accuse the higher ranks among us of having ruined Burns by their selfish neglect of him. We have already stated our doubts whether direct pecuniary help, had it been offered, would have been accepted, or could have proved very effectual. We shall readily admit, however, that much was to be done for Burns; that many a poisoned arrow might have been warded from his bosom; many an entanglement in his path cut asunder by the hand of the powerful; and light and heat, shed on him from high places, would have made his humble atmosphere more genial; and the softest heart then breathing might have lived and died with some fewer pangs. Nay, we shall grant farther, and for Burns it is granting much, that, with all his pride, he would have thanked, even with exaggerated gratitude, any one who had cordially befriended him: patronage, unless once cursed, needed not to have been twice so. At all events, the poor promotion he desired in his calling might have been granted: it was his own scheme, therefore likelier than any other to be of service. All this it might have been a luxury, nay it was a duty, for our nobility to have done. No part of all this, however, did any of them do; or apparently attempt, or wish to do: so much is granted against them. But what then is the amount of their blame? Simply that they were men of the world, and walked by the principles of such men; that they treated Burns, as other nobles and other commoners had done other poets; as the English did Shakespeare; as King Charles and his Cavaliers did Butler, as King Philip and his Grandees did Cervantes. Do men gather grapes of thorns; or shall we cut down our thorns for yielding only a *fence* and haws? How, indeed, could the 'nobility and gentry of his native land' hold out any help to this 'Scottish Bard, proud of his name and country'? Were the nobility and gentry so much as able rightly to help themselves? Had they not their game to preserve; their borough interests to strengthen; dinners, therefore, of various kinds to eat and give? Were their means more than adequate to all this business, or less than adequate? Less than adequate, in general; few of them in reality were richer than Burns; many of them were poorer; for sometimes they had to wring their supplies, as with thumbscrews, from the hard hand; and, in their need of guineas, to forget their duty of mercy; which Burns was never reduced to do. Let us pity and forgive them. The game they preserved and shot, the dinners they ate and gave, the borough interests they strengthened, the *little* Babylons they severally builded by the glory of their might, are all melted or melting back into the primeval Chaos, as man's merely selfish endeavours are fated to do: and here was an action, extending, in virtue of its worldly influence, we may say, through all time; in virtue of its moral nature, beyond all time, being immortal as the Spirit of Goodness itself; this action was offered them to do, and light was not given them to do it. Let us pity and forgive them. But better than pity, let us go and *do otherwise*. Human suffering did not end with the life of Burns; neither was the solemn mandate, 'Love one another, bear one another's burdens,' given to the rich only, but to all men. True, we shall find no Burns

to relieve, to assuage by our aid or our pity; but celestial natures, groaning under the fardels of a weary life, we shall still find; and that wretchedness which Fate has rendered *voiceless* and *tuneless* is not the least wretched, but the most.

Still, we do not think that the blame of Burns's failure lies chiefly with the world. The world, it seems to us, treated him with more rather than with less kindness than it usually shows to such men. It has ever, we fear, shown but small favour to its Teachers: hunger and nakedness, perils and revilings, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice have, in most times and countries, been the market-price it has offered for Wisdom, the welcome with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify it. Homer and Socrates, and the Christian Apostles, belong to old days; but the world's Martyrology was not completed with these. Roger Bacon and Galileo languish in priestly dungeons; Tasso pines in the cell of a madhouse; Camoens dies begging on the streets of Lisbon. So neglected, so 'persecuted they the Prophets,' not in Judea only, but in all places where men have been. We reckon that every poet of Burns's order is, or should be, a prophet and teacher to his age; that he has no right to expect great kindness from it, but rather is bound to do it great kindness; that Burns, in particular, experienced fully the usual proportion of the world's goodness; and that the blame of his failure, as we have said, lies not chiefly with the world.

Where, then, does it lie? We are forced to answer: With himself; it is his inward, not his outward misfortunes that bring him to the dust. Seldom, indeed, is it otherwise; seldom is a life morally wrecked but the grand cause lies in some internal mal-arrangement, some want less of good fortune than of good guidance. Nature fashions no creature without implanting in it the strength needful for its action and duration; least of all does she so neglect her masterpiece and darling, the poetic soul. Neither can we believe that it is in the power of *any* external circumstances utterly to ruin the mind of a man; nay, if proper wisdom be given him, even so much as to affect its essential health and beauty. The sternest sum-total of all worldly misfortunes is Death; nothing more *can* lie in the cup of human woe: yet many men, in all ages, have triumphed over Death, and led it captive; converting its physical victory into a moral victory for themselves, into a seal and immortal consecration for all that their past life had achieved. What has been done, may be done again: nay, it is but the degree and not the kind of such heroism that differs in different seasons; for without some portion of this spirit, not of boisterous daring, but of silent fearlessness, of Self-denial in all its forms, no good man, in any scene or time, has ever attained to be good.

We have already stated the error of Burns; and mourned over it, rather than blamed it. It was the want of unity in his purposes, of consistency in his aims; the hapless attempt to mingle in friendly union the common spirit of the world with the spirit of poetry, which is of a far different and altogether irreconcilable nature. Burns was nothing wholly, and Burns could be nothing, no man formed as he was can be anything, by halves. The heart, not of a mere hot-blooded, popular Verse-monger, or poetical *Restaurateur*, but of a true Poet and Singer, worthy of the old religious heroic times, had been given him: and he fell in an age, not of heroism and religion, but of scepticism, selfishness, and triviality, when true Nobleness was little understood, and its place supplied by a hollow, dissocial, altogether barren and unfruitful principle of Pride. The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually difficult for him to cast aside, or rightly subordinate; the better spirit that was within him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy: he spent his life in endeavouring to reconcile these two; and lost it, as he must lose it, without reconciling them.

Burns was born poor; and born also to continue poor, for he would not endeavour to be otherwise: this it had been well could he have once for all admitted, and considered as finally settled. He was poor, truly; but hundreds even of his own class and order of minds have been poorer, yet have suffered nothing deadly from it; nay, his own Father had a far sorer battle with ungrateful destiny than his was; and he did not yield to it, but died courageously warring, and to all moral intents prevailing, against it. True, Burns had little means, had even little time

for poetry, his only real pursuit and vocation; but so much the more precious was what little he had. In all these external respects his case was hard; but very far from the hardest. Poverty, incessant drudgery and much worse evils, it has often been the lot of Poets and wise men to strive with, and their glory to conquer. Locke was banished as a traitor; and wrote his *Essay on the Human Understanding* sheltering himself in a Dutch garret. Was Milton rich or at his ease when he composed *Paradise Lost*? Not only low, but fallen from a height; not only poor, but impoverished; in darkness and with dangers compassed round, he sang his immortal song, and found fit audience, though few. Did not Cervantes finish his work, a maimed soldier and in prison? Nay, was not the *Araucana*, which Spain acknowledges as its Epic, written without even the aid of paper; on scraps of leather, as the stout fighter and voyager snatched any moment from that wild warfare?

And what, then, had these men, which Burns wanted? Two things; both which, it seems to us, are indispensable for such men. They had a true, religious principle of morals; and a single, not a double aim in their activity. They were not self-seekers and self-worshippers; but seekers and worshippers of something far better than Self. Not personal enjoyment was their object; but a high, heroic idea of Religion, of Patriotism, of heavenly Wisdom, in one or the other form, ever hovered before them; in which cause they neither shrank from suffering, nor called on the earth to witness it as something wonderful; but patiently endured, counting it blessedness enough so to spend and be spent. Thus the 'golden-calf of Self-love,' however curiously carved, was not their Deity; but the Invisible Goodness, which alone is man's reasonable service. This feeling was as a celestial fountain, whose streams refreshed into gladness and beauty all the provinces of their otherwise too desolate existence. In a word, they willed one thing, to which all other things were subordinated and made subservient; and therefore they accomplished it. The wedge will rend rocks; but its edge must be sharp and single: if it be double, the wedge is bruised in pieces and will rend nothing.

Part of this superiority these men owed to their age; in which heroism and devotedness were still practised, or at least not yet disbelieved in; but much of it likewise they owed to themselves. With Burns, again, it was different. His morality, in most of its practical points, is that of a mere worldly man; enjoyment, in a finer or coarser shape, is the only thing he longs and strives for. A noble instinct sometimes raises him above this; but an instinct only, and acting only for moments. He has no Religion; in the shallow age, where his days were cast, Religion was not discriminated from the New and Old Light *forms* of Religion; and was, with these, becoming obsolete in the minds of men. His heart, indeed, is alive with a trembling adoration, but there is no temple in his understanding. He lives in darkness and in the shadow of doubt. His religion, at best, is an anxious wish; like that of Rabelais, 'a great Perhaps.'

He loved Poetry warmly, and in his heart; could he but have loved it purely, and with his whole undivided heart, it had been well. For Poetry, as Burns could have followed it, is but another form of Wisdom, of Religion: is itself Wisdom and Religion. But this also was denied him. His poetry is a stray vagrant gleam, which will not be extinguished within him, yet rises not to be the true light of his path, but is often a wildfire that misleads him. It was not necessary for Burns to be rich, to be, or to seem, 'independent;' but it *was* necessary for him to be at one with his own heart; to place what was highest in his nature highest also in his life; 'to seek within himself for that consistency and sequence, which external events would forever refuse him.' He was born a poet; poetry was the celestial element of his being, and should have been the soul of his whole endeavours. Lifted into that serene ether, whither he had wings given him to mount, he would have needed no other elevation: poverty, neglect, and all evil, save the desecration of himself and his Art, were a small matter to him; the pride and the passions of the world lay far beneath his feet; and he looked down alike on noble and slave, on prince and beggar, and all that wore the stamp of man, with clear recognition, with brotherly affection, with sympathy, with pity. Nay, we question whether for his culture as a Poet poverty and much suffering for a season were not absolutely advantageous. Great men, in look-

ing back over their lives, have testified to that effect. 'I would not for much,' says Jean Paul, 'that I had been born richer.' And yet Paul's birth was poor enough; for, in another place, he adds: 'The prisoner's allowance is bread and water; and I had often only the latter.' But the gold that is refined in the hottest furnace comes out the purest; or, as he has himself expressed it, 'the canary-bird sings sweeter the longer it has been trained in a darkened cage.'

A man like Burns might have divided his hours between poetry and virtuous industry; industry which all true feeling sanctions, nay prescribes, and which has a beauty, for that cause, beyond the pomp of thrones: but to divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets was an ill-starred and inauspicious attempt. How could he be at ease at such banquets? What had he to do there, mingling his music with the coarse roar of altogether earthly voices; brightening the thick smoke of intoxication with fire lent him from heaven? Was it his aim to *enjoy* life! To-morrow he must go drudge as an Exciseman! We wonder not that Burns became moody, indignant, and at times an offender against certain rules of society; but rather that he did not grow utterly frantic, and run *amuck* against them all. How could a man, so falsely placed, by his own or others' fault, ever know contentment or peaceable diligence for an hour? What he did, under such perverse guidance, and what he forbore to do, alike fill us with astonishment at the natural strength and worth of his character.

Doubtless there was a remedy for this perverseness; but not in others; only in himself; least of all in simple increase of wealth and worldly 'respectability.' We hope we have now heard enough about the efficacy of wealth for poetry, and to make poets happy. Nay, have we not seen another instance of it in these very days? Byron, a man of an endowment considerably less ethereal than that of Burns, is born in the rank not of a Scottish ploughman, but of an English peer: the highest worldly honours, the fairest worldly career, are his by inheritance; the richest harvest of fame he soon reaps, in another province, by his own hand. And what does all this avail him? Is he happy, is he good, is he true? Alas, he has a poet's soul, and strives towards the Infinite and the Eternal; and soon feels that all this is but mounting to the housetop to reach the stars! Like Burns, he is only a proud man; might, like him, have 'purchased a pocket-copy of Milton to study the character of Satan;' for Satan is also Byron's grand exemplar, the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently of his conduct. As in Burns's case too, the celestial element will not mingle with the clay of earth; both poet and man of the world he must not be; vulgar Ambition will not live kindly with poetic Adoration; he *cannot* serve God and Mammon. Byron, like Burns, is not happy; nay, he is the most wretched of all men. His life is falsely arranged: the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world; but it is the mad fire of a volcano; and now—we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which ere long will fill itself with snow!

Byron and Burns were sent forth as missionaries to their generation, to teach it a higher Doctrine, a purer Truth; they had a message to deliver, which left them no rest till it was accomplished; in dim throes of pain, this divine behest lay smouldering within them; for they knew not what it meant, and felt it only in mysterious anticipation, and they had to die without articulately uttering it. They are in the camp of the Unconverted; yet not as high messengers of rigorous though benignant truth, but as soft flattering singers, and in pleasant fellowship will they live there: they are first adulated, then persecuted; they accomplish little for others; they find no peace for themselves, but only death and the peace of the grave. We confess, it is not without a certain mournful awe that we view the fate of these noble souls, so richly gifted, yet ruined to so little purpose with all their gifts. It seems to us there is a stern moral taught in this piece of history,—*twice* told us in our own time! Surely to men of like genius, if there be any such, it carries with it a

lesson of deep impressive significance. Surely it would become such a man, furnished for the highest of all enterprises, that of being the Poet of his Age, to consider well what it is that he attempts, and in what spirit he attempts it. For the words of Milton are true in all times, and were never truer than in this: 'He who would write heroic poems must make his whole life a heroic poem.' If he cannot first so make his life, then let him hasten from this arena; for neither its lofty glories, nor its fearful perils, are fit for him. Let him dwindle into a modish ballad-monger; let him worship and besing the idols of the time, and the time will not fail to reward him. If, indeed, he can endure to live in that capacity! Byron and Burns could not live as idol-priests, but the fire of their own hearts consumed them; and better it was for them that they could not. For it is not in the favour of the great or of the small, but in a life of truth, and in the inexpugnable citadel of his own soul, that a Byron's or a Burns's strength must lie. Let the great stand aloof from him, or know how to reverence him. Beautiful is the union of wealth with favour and furtherance for literature; like the costliest flower-jar enclosing the loveliest amaranth. Yet let not the relation be mistaken. A true poet is not one whom they can hire by money or flattery to be a minister of their pleasures, their writer of occasional verses, their purveyor of table-wit; he cannot be their menial, he cannot even be their partisan. At the peril of both parties, let no such union be attempted! Will a Courser of the Sun work softly in the harness of a Dray-horse? His hoofs are of fire, and his path is through the heavens, bringing light to all lands; will he lumber on mud highways, dragging aloof for earthly appetites from door to door?

But we must stop short in these considerations, which would lead us to boundless lengths. We had something to say on the public moral character of Burns; but this we must also forbear. We are far from regarding him as guilty before the world, as guiltier than the average; nay from doubting that he is less guilty than one of ten thousand. Tried at a tribunal far more rigid than that where the *Plebiscita* of common civic reputations are pronounced, he has seemed to us even there less worthy of blame than of pity and wonder. But the world is habitually unjust in its judgments of such men; unjust on many grounds, of which this one may be stated as the substance: It decides, like a court of law, by dead statutes; and not positively but negatively, less on what is done right, than on what is or is not done wrong. Not the few inches of deflection from the mathematical orbit, which are so easily measured, but the *ratio* of these to the whole diameter, constitutes the real aberration. This orbit may be a planet's, its diameter the breadth of the solar system; or it may be a city hippodrome; nay the circle of a ginhorse, its diameter a score of feet or paces. But the inches of deflection only are measured: and it is assumed that the diameter of the ginhorse, and that of the planet, will yield the same ratio when compared with them! Here lies the root of many a blind, cruel condemnation of Burnses, Swifts, Rousseaus, which one never listens to with approval. Granted, the ship comes into harbour with shrouds and tackle damaged; the pilot is blameworthy; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful: but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs.

With our readers in general, with men of right feeling anywhere, we are not required to plead for Burns. In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts, in a far nobler mausoleum than that one of marble; neither will his Works, even as they are, pass away from the memory of men. While the Shakespeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of Thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves; this little Valclusa Fountain will also arrest our eye: for this also is of Nature's own and most cunning workmanship, bursts from the depths of the earth, with a full gushing current, into the light of day; and often will the traveller turn aside to drink of its clear waters, and muse among its rocks and pines.

BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.* [1832.]

Æsop's Fly, sitting on the axle of the chariot, has been much laughed at for exclaiming: What a dust I do raise! Yet which of us, in his way, has not sometimes been guilty of the like? Nay, so foolish are men, they often, standing at ease and as spectators on the highway, will volunteer to exclaim of the Fly (not being tempted to it, as he was) exactly to the same purport: What a dust thou dost raise! Smallest of mortals, when mounted aloft by circumstances, come to seem great; smallest of phenomena connected with them are treated as important, and must be sedulously scanned, and commented upon with loud emphasis.

That Mr. Croker should undertake to edit *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, was a praiseworthy but no miraculous procedure: neither could the accomplishment of such undertaking be, in an epoch like ours, anywise regarded as an event in Universal History; the right or the wrong accomplishment thereof was, in very truth, one of the most insignificant of things. However, it sat in a great environment, on the axle of a high, fast-rolling, parliamentary chariot; and all the world has exclaimed over it, and the author of it: What a dust thou dost raise! List to the Reviews, and 'Organs of Public Opinion,' from the *National Omnibus* upwards: criticisms, vituperative and laudatory, stream from their thousand throats of brass and of leather; here chanting *Io-peans*; there grating harsh thunder or vehement shrewmouse squeaklets; till the general ear is filled, and nigh deafened. Boswell's Book had a noiseless birth, compared with this Edition of Boswell's Book. On the other hand, consider with what degree of tumult *Paradise Lost* and the *Iliad* were ushered in!

To swell such clamour, or prolong it beyond the time, seems mowise our vocation here. At most, perhaps, we are bound to inform simple readers, with all possible brevity, what manner of performance and Edition this is; especially, whether, in our poor judgment, it is worth laying out three pounds sterling upon, yea or not. The whole business belongs distinctly to the lower ranks of the trivial class.

Let us admit, then, with great readiness, that as Johnson once said, and the Editor repeats, 'all works which describe manners require notes in sixty or seventy years, or less;' that, accordingly, a new Edition of Boswell was desirable; and that Mr. Croker has given one. For this task he had various qualifications; his own voluntary resolution to do it; his high place in society, unlocking all manner of archives to him; not less, perhaps, a certain anecdotic-biographic turn of mind, natural or acquired; we mean a love for the *minuter* events of History, and talent for investigating these. Let us admit too, that he has been very diligent; seems to have made inquiries perseveringly far and near; as well as drawn freely from his own ample stores; and so tells us, to appearance quite accurately, much that he has not found lying on the highways, but has had to seek and dig for. Numerous persons, chiefly of quality, rise to view in these Notes; when and also where they came into this world, received office or promotion, died and were buried (only what they *did*, except digest, remaining often too mysterious),—is faithfully enough set down. Whereby all that their various and doubtless widely-scattered Tombstones could have taught us, is here presented, at once, in a bound Book. Thus is an indubitable conquest, though a small one, gained over our great enemy, the all-destroyer Time; and as such shall have welcome.

Nay, let us say that the spirit of Diligence, exhibited in this department, seems to attend the Editor honestly throughout: he keeps everywhere a watchful outlook on his Text; reconciling the distant with the present, or at least indicating and regretting their

irreconcilability; elucidating, smoothing down; in all ways exercising, according to ability, a strict editorial superintendence. Any little Latin or even Greek phrase is rendered into English, in general with perfect accuracy; citations are verified, or else corrected. On all hands, moreover, there is a certain spirit of Decency maintained and insisted on: if not good morals, yet good manners, are rigidly inculcated; if not Religion, and a devout Christian heart, yet Orthodoxy, and a cleanly Shovel-hatted look,—which, as compared with flat Nothing, is something very considerable. Grant too, as no contemptible triumph of this latter spirit, that though the Editor is known as a decided Politician and Party-man, he has carefully subdued all temptations to transgress in that way: except by quite involuntary indications, and rather as it were the pervading temper of the whole, you could not discover on which side of the Political Warfare he is enlisted and fights. This, as we said, is a great triumph of the Decency-principle: for this, and for these other graces and performances, let the Editor have all praise.

Herewith, however, must the praise unfortunately terminate. Diligence, Fidelity, Decency, are good and indispensable: yet, without Faculty, without Light, they will not do the work. Along with that Tombstone-information, perhaps even without much of it, we could have liked to gain some answer, in one way or other, to this wide question: What and how was *English Life* in Johnson's time; wherein has ours grown to differ therefrom? In other words: What things have we to forget, what to fancy and remember, before we, from such distance, can put ourselves in Johnson's *place*; and so, in the full sense of the term, *understand* him, his sayings and his doings? This was indeed specially the problem which a Commentator and Editor had to solve: a complete solution of it should have lain in him, his whole mind should have been filled and prepared with perfect insight into it; then, whether in the way of express Dissertation, of incidental Exposition and Indication, opportunities enough would have occurred of bringing out the same: what was dark in the figure of the Past had thereby been enlightened; Boswell had, not in show and word only, but in very fact, been made *new* again, readable to us who are divided from him, even as he was to those close at hand. Of all which very little has been attempted here; accomplished, we should say, next to nothing, or altogether nothing.

Excuse, no doubt, is in readiness for such omission; and, indeed, for innumerable other failings;—as where, for example, the Editor will punctually explain what is already sun-clear; and then anon, not without frankness, declare frequently enough that 'the Editor does not understand,' that 'the Editor cannot guess,'—while, for most part, the Reader cannot help both guessing and seeing. Thus, if Johnson say, in one sentence, that 'English names should not be used in Latin verses;' and then, in the next sentence, speak blamingly of 'Carteret being used as a dactyl,' will the generality of mortals detect any puzzle there? Or again, where poor Boswell writes: 'I always remember a remark made to me by a Turkish lady, educated in France: "*Ma foi, monsieur, notre bonheur dépend de la façon que notre sang circule*;"'—though the Turkish lady here speaks English-French, where is the call for a Note like this: 'Mr. Boswell no doubt fancied these words had some meaning, or he would hardly have quoted them: but what that meaning is, the Editor cannot guess?' The Editor is clearly no witch at a riddle.—For these and all kindred deficiencies the excuse, as we said, is at hand; but the fact of their existence is not the less certain and regrettable.

Indeed it, from a very early stage of the business, becomes afflictively apparent, how much the Editor, so well furnished with all external appliances and means, is from within unfurnished with means for forming to himself any just notion of Johnson, or of Johnson's Life; and therefore of speaking on that subject with much hope of edifying. Too lightly is it from the first

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taken for granted that *Hunger*, the great basis of our life, is also its apex and ultimate perfection; that as 'Neediness and Greediness and Vainglory' are the chief qualities of most men, so no man, not even a Johnson, acts or can think of acting on any other principle. Whatsoever, therefore, cannot be referred to the two former categories (Need and Greed), is without scruple ranged under the latter. It is here properly that our Editor becomes burdensome; and, to the weaker sort, even a nuisance. 'What good is it,' will such cry, 'when we had still some faint shadow of belief that man was better than a selfish Digesting-machine, what good is it to poke in, at every turn, and explain how this and that which we thought noble in old Samuel, was vulgar, base; that for him too there was no reality but in the Stomach; and except Pudding, and the finer species of pudding which is named Praise, life had no pabulum? Why, for instance, when we know that Johnson *loved* his good Wife, and says expressly that their marriage was "a love-match on both sides,"—should two closed lips open to tell us only this?—"Is it not possible that the obvious advantage of having a woman of experience to superintend an establishment of this kind (the Edial School) may have contributed to a match so disproportionate in point of age.—Ed.?"' Or again when, in the Text, the honest cynic speaks freely of his former poverty, and it is known that he once lived on fourpence-halfpenny a-day,—need a Commentator advance, and comment thus?—"When we find Dr. Johnson tell unpleasant truths to, or of, other men, let us recollect that he does not appear to have spared himself, on occasions in which he might be forgiven for doing so.' 'Why in short,' continues the exasperated Reader, 'should Notes of this species stand affronting me, when there might have been no Note at all?'—Gentle Reader, we answer, be not wroth. What other could an honest Commentator do, than give thee the best he had? Such was the picture and theorem he had fashioned for himself of the world and of man's doings therein: take it, and draw wise inferences from it. If there did exist a Leader of Public Opinion, and Champion of Orthodoxy in the Church of Jesus of Nazareth, who reckoned that man's glory consisted in not being poor; and that a Sage, and Prophet of his time, must needs blush because the world had paid him at that easy rate of fourpence-halfpenny *per diem*,—was not the fact of such existence worth knowing, worth considering?

Of a much milder hue, yet to us practically of an all-defacing, and for the present enterprise quite ruinous character,—is another grand fundamental failing; the last we shall feel ourselves obliged to take the pain of specifying here. It is, that our Editor has fatally, and almost surprisingly, mistaken the limits of an Editor's function; and so, instead of working on the margin with his Pen, to elucidate as best might be, strikes boldly into the body of the page with his Scissors, and there clips at discretion! Four Books Mr. C. had by him, wherefrom to gather light for the fifth, which was Boswell's. What does he do but now, in the placidest manner,—slit the whole five into slips, and sew these together into a *sectum quid*, exactly at his own convenience; giving Boswell the credit of the whole! By what art-magic, our readers ask, has he united them? By the simplest of all: by Brackets. Never before was the full virtue of the Bracket made manifest. You begin a sentence under Boswell's guidance, thinking to be carried happily through it by the same: but no; in the middle, perhaps after your semicolon, and some consequent 'for,'—starts up one of these Bracket-ligatures, and stitches you in from half a page to twenty or thirty pages of a Hawkins, Tyers, Murphy, Piozzi; so that often one must make the old sad reflection, Where we are, we know; whither we are going, no man knoweth! It is truly said also: There is much between the cup and the lip; but here the case is still sadder; for not till after consideration can you ascertain, now when the cup is *at* the lip, what liquor it is you are imbibing; whether Boswell's French wine which you began with, or some Piozzi's ginger-beer, or Hawkins's entire, or perhaps some other great Brewer's penny-swipes or even alegar, which has been surreptitiously substituted instead thereof. A situation almost original; not to be tried a second time! But, in fine, what ideas Mr. Croker entertains of a literary *whole* and the thing called *Book*, and how the very Printer's Devils did not rise in mutiny against such a conglomeration as this, and refuse to print it,—may remain a problem.

And now happily our say is said. All faults, the Moralists tell us, are properly *shortcomings*; crimes themselves are nothing other than a *not doing enough*; a *fighting*, but with defective vigour. How much more a mere insufficiency, and this after good efforts, in handicraft practice! Mr. Croker says: 'The worst that can happen is that all the present Editor has contributed may, if the reader so pleases, be rejected as *surplusage*.' It is our pleasant duty to take with hearty welcome what he has given; and render thanks even for what he meant to give. Next and finally, it is our painful duty to declare, aloud if that be necessary, that his gift, as weighed against the hard money which the Booksellers demand for giving it you, is (in our judgment) very greatly the lighter. No portion, accordingly, of our small floating capital has been embarked in the business, or shall ever be; indeed, were we in the market for such a thing, there is simply *no* Edition of *Boswell* to which this last would seem preferable. And now enough, and more than enough!

We have next a word to say of James Boswell. Boswell has already been much commented upon; but rather in the way of censure and vituperation than of true recognition. He was a man that brought himself much before the world; confessed that he eagerly coveted fame, or if that were not possible, notoriety; of which latter as he gained far more than seemed his due, the public were incited, not only by their natural love of scandal, but by a special ground of envy, to say whatever ill of him could be said. Out of the fifteen millions that then lived, and had bed and board, in the British Islands, this man has provided us a greater *pleasure* than any other individual, at whose cost we now enjoy ourselves; perhaps has done us a greater *service* than can be specially attributed to more than two or three: yet, ungrateful that we are, no written or spoken eulogy of James Boswell anywhere exists; his recompense in solid pudding (so far as copy-right went) was not excessive; and as for the empty praise, it has altogether been denied him. Men are unwiser than children; they do *not* know the hand that feeds them.

Boswell was a person whose mean or bad qualities lay open to the general eye; visible, palpable to the dullest. His good qualities, again, belonged not to the Time he lived in; were far from common then; indeed, in such a degree, were almost unexampled; not recognisable therefore by every one; nay, apt even (so strange had they grown) to be confounded with the very vices they lay contiguous to, and had sprung out of. That he was a wine-bibber and gross liver; gluttonously fond of whatever would yield him a little solacement, were it only of a stomachic character, is undeniable enough. That he was vain, heedless, a babbler; had much of the sycophant, alternating with the braggadocio, curiously spiced too with an all-pervading dash of the coxcomb; that he gloried much when the Tailor, by a court suit, had made a new man of him; that he appeared at the Shakespeare Jubilee with a riband, imprinted 'CORSIKA BOSWELL,' round his hat; and in short, if you will, lived no day of his life without doing and saying more than one pretentious ineptitude: all this unhappily is evident as the sun at noon. The very look of Boswell seems to have signified so much. In that cocked nose, cocked partly in triumph over his weaker fellow-creatures, partly to snuff-up the smell of coming pleasure, and scent it from afar; in those bag-cheeks, hanging like half-filled wine-skins, still able to contain more; in that coarsely-protruded shelf-mouth, that fat dewlapped chin; in all this, who sees not sensuality, pretension, boisterous imbecility enough; much that could not have been ornamental in the temper of a great man's overfed great man (what the Scotch name *flunkie*), though it had been more natural there? The under part of Boswell's face is of a low, almost brutish character.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, what great and genuine good lay in him was nowise so self-evident. That Boswell was a hunter after spiritual Notabilities, that he loved such, and longed, and even crept and crawled to be near them; that he first (in old Touchwood Auchinleck's phraseology) 'took on with Paoli;' and then being off with 'the Corsican landlouper,' took on with a schoolmaster, 'ane that keeped a schule, and ca'd it an academy:' that he did all this, and could not help doing it, we account a very singular merit. The man, once for all, had an 'open sense,' an open loving heart, which so few have: where

Excellence existed, he was compelled to acknowledge it; was drawn towards it, and (let the old sulphur-brand of a Laird say what he liked) *could not but* walk with it,—if not as superior, if not as equal, then as inferior and lackey, better so than not at all. If we reflect now that this love of Excellence had not only such an evil nature to triumph over; but also what an education and social position withstood it and weighed it down, its innate strength, victorious over all these things, may astonish us. Consider what an inward impulse there must have been, how many mountains of impediment hurled aside, before the Scottish Laird could, as humble servant, embrace the knees (the bosom was not permitted him) of the English Dominie! Your Scottish Laird, says an English naturalist of these days, may be defined as the hungriest and vainest of all bipeds yet known. Boswell too was a Tory; of quite peculiarly feudal, genealogical, pragmatismal temper; had been nurtured in an atmosphere of Heraldry, at the feet of a very Gamaliel in that kind; within bare walls, adorned only with pedigrees, amid serving-men in threadbare livery; all things teaching him, from birth upwards, to remember that a Laird was a Laird. Perhaps there was a special vanity in his very blood: old Auchinleck had, if not the gay, tail-spreading, peacock vanity of his son, no little of the slow-stalking, contentious, hissing vanity of the gander; a still more fatal species. Scottish Advocates will yet tell you how the ancient man, having chanced to be the first sheriff appointed (after the abolition of 'hereditary jurisdictions') by royal authority, was wont, in dull-snuffling pompous tone, to preface many a deliverance from the bench with these words: 'I, the first King's Sheriff in Scotland.'

And now behold the worthy Bozzy, so prepossessed and held back by nature and by art, fly nevertheless like iron to its magnet, whither his better genius called! You may surround the iron and the magnet with what enclosures and encumbrances you please,—with wood, with rubbish, with brass: it matters not, the two feel each other, they struggle restlessly towards each other, they *will* be together. The iron may be a Scottish squirelet, full of gulosity and 'gigmanity';* the magnet an English plebeian, and moving rag-and-dust mountain, coarse, proud, irascible, imperious: nevertheless, behold how they embrace, and inseparably cleave to one another! It is one of the strangest phenomena of the past century, that at a time when the old reverent feeling of Discipleship (such as brought men from far countries, with rich gifts, and prostrate soul, to the feet of the Prophets) had passed utterly away from men's practical experience, and was no longer surmised to exist (as it does), perennial, indestructible, in man's inmost heart,—James Boswell should have been the individual, of all others, predestined to recall it, in such singular guise, to the wondering, and, for a long while, laughing and unrecognising world. It has been commonly said, The man's vulgar vanity was all that attached him to Johnson; he delighted to be seen near him, to be thought connected with him. Now let it be at once granted that no consideration springing out of vulgar vanity could well be absent from the mind of James Boswell, in this his intercourse with Johnson, or in any considerable transaction of his life. At the same time, ask yourself: Whether such vanity, and nothing else, actuated him therein; whether this was the true essence and moving principle of the phenomenon, or not rather its outward vesture, and the accidental environment (and defacement) in which it came to light? The man was, by nature and habit, vain; a sycophant-coxcomb, be it granted: but had there been nothing more than vanity in him, was Samuel Johnson the man of men to whom he must attach himself? At the date when Johnson was a poor rusty-coated 'scholar,' dwelling in Temple Lane, and indeed throughout their whole intercourse afterwards, were there not chancellors and prime ministers enough; graceful gentlemen, the glass of fashion; honour-giving noblemen; dinner-giving rich men; renowned fire-eaters, swordsmen, gowmsmen; Quacks and Realities of all hues,—any one of whom bulked much larger in the world's eye than Johnson ever did? To any one of whom, by half that submissiveness and assiduity, our Bozzy might have recommended himself; and sat there, the

envy of surrounding lickspittles; pocketing now solid emolument, swallowing now well-cooked viands and wines of rich vintage; in each case, also, shone-on by some glittering reflex of Renown or Notoriety, so as to be the observed of innumerable observers. To no one of whom, however, though otherwise a most diligent solicitor and purveyor, did he so attach himself: such vulgar courtierships were his paid drudgery, or leisure amusement; the worship of Johnson was his grand, ideal, voluntary business. Does not the frothy-hearted, yet enthusiastic man, doffing his Advocate's-wig, regularly take post, and hurry up to London, for the sake of his Sage chiefly; as to a Feast of Tabernacles, the Sabbath of his whole year? The plate-licker and wine-bibber drives into Bolt Court, to sip muddy coffee with a cynical old man, and a sour-tempered blind old woman (feeling the cups, whether they are full, with her finger); and patiently endures contradictions without end; too happy so he may but be allowed to listen and live. Nay, it does not appear that vulgar vanity could ever have been much flattered by Boswell's relation to Johnson. Mr. Croker says, Johnson was, to the last, little regarded by the great world; from which, for a vulgar vanity, all honour, as from its fountain, descends. Bozzy, even among Johnson's friends and special admirers, seems rather to have been laughed at than envied: his officious, whisking, consequential ways, the daily reproofs and rebuffs he underwent, could gain from the world no golden but only leaden opinions. His devout Discipleship seemed nothing more than a mean Spanielship, in the general eye. His mighty 'constellation,' or sun, round whom he, as satellite, observantly gyrated, was, for the mass of men, but a huge, ill-snuffed tallow-light, and he a weak night-moth, circling foolishly, dangerously about it, not knowing what he wanted. If he enjoyed Highland dinners and toasts, as henchman to a new sort of chieftain, Henry Erskine, in the domestic 'Outer-House,' could hand him a shilling for 'the sight of his Bear.' Doubtless the man was laughed at, and often heard himself laughed at for his Johnsonism. To be envied is the grand and sole aim of vulgar vanity; to be filled with good things is that of sensuality: for Johnson perhaps no man living *envied* poor Bozzy; and of good things (except himself paid for them) there was no vestige in that acquaintance-ship. Had nothing other or better than vanity and sensuality been there, Johnson and Boswell had never come together, or had soon and finally separated again.

In fact, the so copious terrestrial dross that welters chaotically, as the outer sphere of this man's character, does but render for us more remarkable, more touching, the celestial spark of goodness, of light, and Reverence for Wisdom, which dwelt in the interior, and could struggle through such encumbrances, and in some degree illuminate and beautify them. There is much lying yet undeveloped in the love of Boswell for Johnson. A cheering proof, in a time which else utterly wanted and still wants such, that living Wisdom is quite *infinitely* precious to man, is the symbol of the Godlike to him, which even weak eyes may discern; that Loyalty, Discipleship, all that was ever meant by *Hero-worship*, lives perennially in the human bosom, and waits, even in these dead days, only for occasions to unfold it, and inspire all men with it, and again make the world alive! James Boswell we can regard as a practical witness, or real *martyr*, to this high everlasting truth. A wonderful martyr, if you will; and in a time which made such martyrdom doubly wonderful: yet the time and its martyr perhaps suited each other. For a decrepit, death-sick Era, when CANT had first decisively opened her poison-breathing lips to proclaim that God-worship and Mammon-worship were one and the same, that Life was a *Lie*, and the Earth Beelzebub's, which the *Supreme Quack* should inherit; and so all things were fallen into the yellow leaf, and fast hastening to noisome corruption: for such an Era, perhaps no better Prophet than a parti-coloured Zany-Prophet, concealing, from himself and others, his prophetic significance in such unexpected vestures,—was deserved, or would have been in place. A precious medicine lay hidden in floods of coarsest, most composite treacle: the world swallowed the treacle, for it suited the world's palate; and now, after half a century, may the medicine also begin to show itself! James Boswell belonged, in his corruptible part, to the lowest classes of mankind; a foolish, inflated creature, swimming in an element of self-conceit:

* 'Q. What do you mean by "respectable"?—A. He always kept a gig.' (*Thurtell's Trial*).—Thus, it has been said, 'does society naturally divide itself into four classes: Noblemen, Gentlemen, Gigmens, and Men.'

but in his corruptible there dwelt an incorruptible, all the more impressive and indubitable for the strange lodging it had taken.

Consider too, with what force, diligence and vivacity he has rendered back all this which, in Johnson's neighbourhood, his 'open sense' had so eagerly and freely taken in. That loose-flowing, careless-looking Work of his is as a picture by one of Nature's own Artists; the best possible resemblance of a Reality; like the very image thereof in a clear mirror. Which indeed it was: let but the mirror be *clear*, this is the great point; the picture must and will be genuine. How the babbling Bozzy, inspired only by love, and the recognition and vision which love can lend, epitomises nightly the words of Wisdom, the deeds and aspects of Wisdom, and so, by little and little, unconsciously works together for us a whole *Johnsoniad*; a more free, perfect, sunlit and spirit-speaking likeness than for many centuries had been drawn by man of man! Scarcely since the days of Homer has the feat been equalled; indeed, in many senses, this also is a kind of Heroic Poem. The fit *Odyssey* of our unheroic age was to be written, not sung; of a Thinker, not of a Fighter; and (for want of a Homer) by the first open soul that might offer,—looked such even through the organs of a Boswell. We do the man's intellectual endowment great wrong, if we measure it by its mere logical outcome; though here too, there is not wanting a light ingenuity, a figurativeness and fanciful sport, with glimpses of insight far deeper than the common. But Boswell's grand intellectual talent was, as such ever is, an *unconscious* one, of far higher reach and significance than Logic; and showed itself in the whole, not in parts. Here again we have that old saying verified, 'The heart sees farther than the head.'

Thus does poor Bozzy stand out to us as an ill-assorted, glaring mixture of the highest and the lowest. What, indeed, is man's life generally but a kind of beast-godhood; the god in us triumphing more and more over the beast; striving more and more to subdue it under his feet? Did not the Ancients, in their wise, perennially-significant way, figure Nature itself, their sacred ALL, or PAN, as a portentous commingling of these two discords; as musical, humane, oracular in its upper part, yet ending below in the cloven hairy feet of a goat? The union of melodious, celestial Freewill and Reason with foul Irrationality and Lust; in which, nevertheless, dwelt a mysterious unspeakable Fear and half-mad *panic* Awe; as for mortals there well might! And is not man a microcosm, or epitomised mirror of that same Universe; or rather, is not that Universe even Himself, the reflex of his own fearful and wonderful being, 'the waste fantasy of his own dream'? No wonder that man, that each man, and James Boswell like the others, should resemble it! The peculiarity in his case was the unusual defect of amalgamation and subordination: the highest lay side by side with the lowest; not morally combined with it and spiritually transfiguring it, but tumbling in half-mechanical juxtaposition with it, and from time to time, as the mad alternation chanced, irradiating it, or eclipsed by it.

The world, as we said, has been but unjust to him; discerning only the outer terrestrial and often sordid mass; without eye, as it generally is, for his inner divine secret; and thus figuring him nowise as a god Pan, but simply of the bestial species, like the cattle on a thousand hills. Nay, sometimes a strange enough hypothesis has been started of him; as if it were in virtue even of these same bad qualities that he did his good work; as if it were the very fact of his being among the worst men in this world that had enabled him to write one of the best books therein! Falsely hypothesis, we may venture to say, never rose in human soul. *Bad* is by its nature negative, and can do *nothing*; whatsoever enables us to *do* anything is by its very nature *good*. Alas, that there should be teachers in Israel, or even learners, to whom this world-ancient fact is still problematical, or even deniable! Boswell wrote a good Book because he had a heart and an eye to discern Wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth; because of his free insight, his lively talent, above all, of his Love and childlike Open-mindedness. His sneaking sycophancies, his greediness and forwardness, whatever was bestial and earthy in him, are so many blemishes in his Book, which still disturb us in its clearness; wholly hindrances, not helps. Towards Johnson, however, his feeling was not Sycophancy, which is the lowest,

but Reverence, which is the highest of human feelings. None but a *reverent* man (which so unspeakably few are) could have found his way from Boswell's environment to Johnson's: if such worship for real God-made superiors showed itself also as worship for apparent Tailor-made superiors, even as hollow interested mouth-worship for such,—the case, in this composite human nature of ours, was not miraculous, the more was the pity! But for ourselves, let every one of us cling to this last article of Faith, and know it as the beginning of all knowledge worth the name: That neither James Boswell's good Book, nor any other good thing, in any time or in any place, was, is or can be performed by any man in virtue of his *badness*, but always and solely in spite thereof.

As for the Book itself, questionless the universal favour entertained for it is well merited. In worth as a Book we have rated it beyond any other product of the eighteenth century: all Johnson's own Writings, laborious and in their kind genuine above most, stand on a quite inferior level to it; already, indeed, they are becoming obsolete for this generation; and for some future generation may be valuable chiefly as Prolegomena and expository Scholia to this *Johnsoniad* of Boswell. Which of us but remembers, as one of the sunny spots in his existence, the day when he opened these airy volumes, fascinating him by a true natural magic! It was as if the curtains of the past were drawn aside, and we looked mysteriously into a kindred country, where dwelt our Fathers; inexpressibly dear to us, but which had seemed forever hidden from our eyes. For the dead Night had engulfed it; all was gone, vanished as if it had not been. Nevertheless, wondrously given back to us, there once more it lay; all bright, lucid, blooming; a little island of Creation amid the circumambient Void. There it still lies; like a thing stationary, imperishable, over which changeful Time were now accumulating itself in vain, and could not, any longer, harm it, or hide it.

If we examine by what charm it is that men are still held to this *Life of Johnson*, now when so much else has been forgotten, the main part of the answer will perhaps be found in that speculation 'on the import of *Reality*,' communicated to the world, last month, in this Magazine. The *Johnsoniad* of Boswell turns on objects that in very deed existed; it is all *true*. So far other in melodiousness of tone, it vies with the *Odyssey*, or surpasses it, in this one point: to us these read pages, as those chanted hexameters were to the first Greek hearers, are, in the fullest deepest sense, wholly *credible*. All the wit and wisdom lying embalmed in Boswell's Book, plenteous as these are, could not have saved it. Far more scientific *instruction* (mere excitement and enlightenment of the *thinking power*) can be found in twenty other works of that time, which make but a quite secondary impression on us. The other works of that time, however, fall under one of two classes: Either they are professedly Didactic; and, in that way, mere Abstractions, Philosophic Diagrams, incapable of interesting us much otherwise than as *Euclid's Elements* may do: Or else, with all their vivacity, and pictorial richness of colour, they are *Fictions and not Realities*. Deep truly, as Herr Sauerteig urges, is the force of this consideration: the thing here stated is a fact; those figures, that local habitation, are not shadow but substance. In virtue of such advantages, see how a very Boswell may become Poetical!

Critics insist much on the Poet that he should communicate an 'Infinite' to his delineation; that by intensity of conception, by that gift of 'transcendental Thought,' which is fitly named *genius*, and inspiration, he should *inform* the Finite with a certain Infinitude of significance; or as they sometimes say, ennoble the Actual into Idealness. They are right in their precept; they mean rightly. But in cases like this of the *Johnsoniad*, such is the dark grandeur of that 'Time element,' wherein man's soul here below lives imprisoned,—the Poet's task is, as it were, done to his hand: Time itself, which is the outer veil of Eternity, invests, of its own accord, with an authentic, felt 'infinite' whatsoever it has once embraced in its mysterious folds. Consider all that lies in that one word *Past*! What a pathetic, sacred, in every sense *poetic*, meaning is implied in it; a meaning growing ever the clearer, the farther we recede in Time,—the *more* of that same Past we have to look through!—On which ground indeed must Sauerteig have built, and not without plausibility, in that strange thesis of his: 'That History, after all, is the true Poetry; that Reality, if rightly interpreted, is grander than Fiction; nay

that even in the right interpretation of Reality and History does genuine Poetry consist.

Thus for *Boswell's Life of Johnson* has Time done, is Time still doing, what no ornament of Art or Artifice could have done for it. Rough Samuel and sleek wheedling James *were*, and *are not*. Their Life and whole personal Environment has melted into air. The Mitre Tavern still stands in Fleet Street: but where now is its scot-and-lot paying, beef-and-ale loving, cocked-hatted, pot-bellied Landlord; its rosy-faced assiduous Landlady, with all her shining brass-pans, waxed tables, well-filled larder-shelves; her cooks, and bootjacks, and errand-boys, and watery-mouthed hangers-on? Gone! Gone! The becking Waiter who, with wreathed smiles, was wont to spread for Samuel and Bozzy their supper of the gods, has long since pocketed his last sixpence; and vanished, sixpences and all, like a ghost at cock-crowing. The Bottles they drank out of are all broken, the Chairs they sat on all rotted and burnt; the very Knives and Forks they ate with have rusted to the heart, and become brown oxide of iron, and mingled with the indiscriminate clay. All, all has vanished; in every deed and truth, like that baseless fabric of Prospero's air-vision. Of the Mitre Tavern nothing but the bare walls remain there: of London, of England, of the World, nothing but the bare walls remain; and these also decaying (were they of adamant), only slower. The mysterious River of Existence rushes on: a new Billow thereof has arrived, and lashes wildly as ever round the old embankments; but the former Billow with *its* loud, mad eddyings, where is it?—Where!—Now this Book of Boswell's, this is precisely a revocation of the edict of Destiny; so that Time shall not utterly, not so soon by several centuries, have dominion over us. A little row of Naphtha-lamps, with its line of Naphtha-light, burns clear and holy through the dead Night of the Past: they who are gone are still here; though hidden they are revealed, though dead they yet speak. There it shines, that little miraculously lamplit Pathway; shedding its feebler and feebler twilight into the boundless dark Oblivion,—for all that our Johnson *touched* has become illuminated for us: on which miraculous little Pathway we can still travel, and see wonders.

It is not speaking with exaggeration, but with strict measured sobriety, to say that this Book of Boswell's will give us more real insight into the *History of England* during those days than twenty other Books, falsely entitled 'Histories,' which take to themselves that special aim. What good is it to me though innumerable Smolletts and Belshams keep dinning in my ears that a man named George the Third was born and bred up, and a man named George the Second died; that Walpole, and the Pelhams, and Chatham, and Rockingham, and Shelburne, and North, with their Coalition or their Separation Ministries, all ousted one another; and vehemently scrambled for 'the thing they called the Rudder of Government, but which was in reality the Spigot of Taxation'? That debates were held, and infinite jarring and jargon-ing took place; and road-bills and enclosure-bills, and game-bills and India-bills, and Laws which no man can number, which happily few men needed to trouble their heads with beyond the passing moment, were enacted, and printed by the King's Stationer? That he who sat in Chancery, and rayed out speculation from the Woolsack, was now a man that squinted, now a man that did not squint? To the hungry and thirsty mind all this avails next to nothing. These men and these things, we indeed know, did swim, by strength or by specific levity, as apples or as horse-dung, on the top of the current; but is it by painfully noting the courses, eddyings and bobbings hither and thither of such drift-articles, that you will unfold to me the nature of the current itself; of that mighty-rolling, loud-roaring Life-current, bottomless as the foundations of the Universe, mysterious as its Author? The thing I want to see is not Redbook Lists, and Court Calendars, and Parliamentary Registers, but the LIFE OF MAN in England: what men did, thought, suffered, enjoyed; the form, especially the spirit, of their terrestrial existence, its outward environment, its inward principle; *how* and *what* it was; whence it proceeded, whither it was tending.

Mournful, in truth, is it to behold what the business called 'History,' in these so enlightened and illuminated times, still continues to be. Can you gather from it, read till your eyes go out, any dimmest shadow of an answer to that great question: How men lived and had their being; were it but economically,

as, what wages they got, and what they bought with these? Unhappily you cannot. History will throw no light on any such matter. At the point where living memory fails, it is all darkness; Mr. Senior and Mr. Sadler must still debate this simplest of all elements in the condition of the Past: Whether men were better off, in their mere larders and pantries, or were worse off than now! History, as it stands all bound up in gilt volumes, is but a shade more instructive than the wooden volumes of a Backgammon-board. How my Prime Minister was appointed is of less moment to me than How my House Servant was hired. In these days, ten ordinary Histories of Kings and Courtiers were well exchanged against the tenth part of one good History of Booksellers.

For example, I would fain know the History of Scotland: who can tell it me? 'Robertson,' say innumerable voices; 'Robertson against the world.' I open Robertson; and find there, through long ages too confused for narrative, and fit only to be presented in the way of epitome and distilled essence, a cunning answer and hypothesis, not to this question: By whom, and by what means, when and how, was this fair broad Scotland, with its Arts and Manufactures, Temples, Schools, Institutions, Poetry, Spirit, National Character, created, and made arable, verdant, peculiar, great, here as I can see some fair section of it lying, kind and strong (like some Bacchus-tamed Lion), from the Castle Hill of Edinburgh?—but to this other question: How did the King keep himself alive in those old days; and restrain so many Butcher-Barons and ravenous Henchmen from utterly extirpating one another, so that killing went on in some sort of moderation? In the one little Letter of Æneas Sylvius, from old Scotland, there is more of History than in all this.—At length, however, we come to a luminous age, interesting enough; to the age of the Reformation. All Scotland is awakened to a second higher life: the Spirit of the Highest stirs in every bosom, agitates every bosom; Scotland is convulsed, fermenting, struggling to body itself forth anew. To the herdsmen, among his cattle in remote woods; to the craftsman, in his rude, heath-thatched workshop, among his rude guild-brethren; to the great and to the little, a new light has arisen: in town and hamlet groups are gathered, with eloquent looks, and governed or ungovernable tongues; the great and the little go forth together to do battle for the Lord against the mighty. We ask, with breathless eagerness: How was it; how went it on? Let us understand it, let us see it, and know it!—In reply, is handed us a really graceful and most dainty little Scandalous Chronicle (as for some Journal of Fashion) of two persons: Mary Stuart, a Beauty, but over light-headed; and Henry Darnley, a Booby who had fine legs. How these first courted, billed and cooed, according to nature; then pouted, fretted, grew utterly enraged, and blew one another up with gunpowder: this, and not the History of Scotland, is what we goodnaturedly read. Nay, by other hands, something like a horse-load of other Books have been written to prove that it was the Beauty who blew up the Booby, and that it was not she. Who or what it was, the thing once for all *being* so effectually done, concerns us little. To know Scotland, at that great epoch, were a valuable increase of knowledge: to know poor Darnley, and see him with burning candle, from centre to skin, were no increase of knowledge at all.—Thus is History written.

Hence, indeed, comes it that History, which should be 'the essence of innumerable Biographies,' will tell us, question it as we like, less than one genuine Biography may do, pleasantly and of its own accord! The time is approaching when history will be attempted on quite other principles; when the Court, the Senate, and the Battlefield, receding more and more into the background, the Temple, the Workshop and Social Hearth will advance more and more into the foreground; and History will not content itself with shaping some answer to that question: How were men *taxed* and *kept quiet* then? but will seek to answer this other infinitely wider and higher question: How and what *were men* then? Not our Government only, or the 'House wherein our life was led,' but the *Life* itself we led there, will be inquired into. Of which latter it may be found that Government, in any modern sense of the word, is after all but a secondary condition: in the mere sense of *Taxation* and *Keeping quiet*, a small, almost a pitiful one.—Meanwhile let us welcome such Boswells, each in his *degree*, as

bring us any genuine contributions, were it ever so inadequate, so inconsiderable.

An exception was early taken against this *Life of Johnson*, and all similar enterprises, which we here recommend; and has been transmitted from critic to critic, and repeated in their several dialects, uninterruptedly, ever since: That such jottings-down of careless conversation are an infringement of social privacy; a crime against our highest Freedom, the Freedom of man's intercourse with man. To this accusation, which we have read and heard oftener than enough, might it not be well for once to offer the flattest contradiction, and plea of *Not at all guilty?* Not that conversation is noted down, but that conversation should not deserve noting down, is the evil. Doubtless, if conversation be falsely recorded, then is it simply a Lie; and worthy of being swept, with all despatch, to the Father of Lies. But if, on the other hand, conversation can be authentically recorded, and any one is ready for the task, let him by all means proceed with it; let conversation be kept in remembrance to the latest date possible. Nay, should the consciousness that a man may be among us 'taking notes' tend, in any measure, to restrict those floods of idle insincere *speech*, with which the *thought* of mankind is well-nigh drowned,—were it other than the most indubitable benefit? He who speaks honestly cares not, needs not care, though his words be preserved to remotest time; for him who speaks dishonestly, the fittest of all punishments seems to be this same, which the nature of the case provides. The dishonest speaker, not he only who purposely utters falsehoods, but he who does not purposely, and with sincere heart, utter Truth, and Truth alone; who babbles he knows not what, and has clapped no bridle on his tongue, but lets it run racket, ejecting chatter and futility,—is among the most indisputable malefactors omitted, or inserted, in the Criminal Calendar. To him that will well consider it, idle speaking is precisely the beginning of all Hollowness, Halfness, *Infidelity* (want of Faithfulness); the genial atmosphere in which rank weeds of every kind attain the mastery over noble fruits in man's life, and utterly choke them out: one of the most crying maladies of these days, and to be testified against, and in all ways to the uttermost withstood. Wise, of a wisdom far beyond our shallow depth, was that old precept: *Watch thy tongue*; out of it are the issues of Life! 'Man is properly an *incarnated word*;' the *word* that he speaks is the *man* himself. Were the eyes put into our head, that we might *see*; or only that we might fancy, and plausibly pretend, we had *seen*? Was the tongue suspended there, that it might tell truly what we had seen, and make man the soul's-brother of man; or only that it might utter vain sounds, jargon, soul-confusing, and so *divide* man, as by enchanted walls of Darkness, from union with man? Thou who wearest that cunning, heaven-made organ, a Tongue, think well of this. Speak not, I passionately entreat thee, till thy thought hath silently matured itself, till thou have other than mad and mad-making noises to emit: *hold thy tongue* (thou hast it a-holding) till *some* meaning lie behind, to set it wagging. Consider the significance of SILENCE: it is boundless, never by meditating to be exhausted; unspeakably profitable to thee! Cease that chaotic hubbub, wherein thy own soul runs to waste, to confused suicidal dislocation and stupor: out of Silence comes thy strength. 'Speech is silvern, Silence is golden; Speech is human, Silence is divine.' Fool! thinkest thou that because no Boswell is there with ass-skin and blacklead to note thy jargon, it therefore dies and is harmless? Nothing dies, nothing can die. No idlest word thou speakest but is a seed cast into Time, and grows through all Eternity! The Recording Angel, consider it well, is no fable, but the truest of truths: the paper tablets thou canst burn; of the 'iron leaf' there is no burning.—Truly, if we can permit God Almighty to note down our conversation, thinking it good enough for Him,—any poor Boswell need not scruple to work his will of it.

Leaving now this our English *Odyssey*, with its Singer and Scholiast, let us come to the *Ulysses*; that great Samuel Johnson himself, the far-experienced, 'much-enduring man,' whose labours and pilgrimage are here sung. A full-length image of his Existence has been preserved for us: and he, perhaps of all living Englishmen, was the one who best deserved that honour. For if it is true, and now almost proverbial, that 'the Life of the lowest mortal, if faithfully recorded, would be interesting to the highest;'

how much more when the mortal in question was already distinguished in fortune and natural quality, so that his thinkings and doings were not significant of himself only, but of large masses of mankind! 'There is not a man whom I meet on the streets,' says one, 'but I could like, were it otherwise convenient, to know his Biography:' nevertheless, could an enlightened curiosity be so far gratified, it must be owned the Biography of most ought to be, in an extreme degree, *summary*. In this world, there is so wonderfully little self-subsistence among men; next to no originality (though never absolutely *none*): one Life is too servilely the copy of another; and so in whole thousands of them you find little that is properly new; nothing but the old song sung by a new voice, with better or worse execution, here and there an ornamental quaver, and false notes enough: but the fundamental tune is ever the same; and for the *words*, these, all that they meant stands written generally on the Churchyard-stone: *Natus sum; esuriebam, querebam; nunc repletus requiesco*. Mankind sail their Life-voyage in huge fleets, following some single whale-fishing or herring-fishing Commodore: the log-book of each differs not, in essential purport, from that of any other: may the most have no legible log-book (reflection, observation not being among their talents); keep no reckoning, only *keep in sight* of the flagship,—and fish. Read the Commodore's Papers (know *his* Life); and even your lover of that street Biography will have learned the most of what he sought after.

Or, the servile *imitancy*, and yet also a nobler relationship and mysterious union to one another which lies in such imitancy, of Mankind might be illustrated under the different figure, itself nowise *original*, of a Flock of Sheep. Sheep go in flocks for three reasons: First, because they are of a gregarious temper, and *love* to be together: Secondly, because of their cowardice; they are afraid to be left alone: Thirdly, because the common run of them are dull of sight, to a proverb, and can have no choice in roads; sheep can in fact *see* nothing; in a celestial Luminary, and a scoured pewter Tankard, would discern only that both dazzled them, and were of unspeakable glory. How like their fellow-creatures of the human species! Men too, as was from the first maintained here, are gregarious; then surely faint-hearted enough, trembling to be left by themselves; above all, dull-sighted, down to the verge of utter blindness. Thus are we seen ever running in torrents, and mobs, if we run at all; and after what foolish scoured Tankards, mistaking them for Suns! Foolish Turnip-lanterns likewise, to all appearance supernatural, keep whole nations quaking, their hair on end. Neither know we, except by blind habit, where the good pastures lie: solely when the sweet grass is between our teeth, we know it, and chew it; also when grass is bitter and scant, we know it,—and bleat and butt: these last two facts we know of a truth and in very deed. Thus do Men and Sheep play their parts on this Nether Earth; wandering restlessly in large masses, they know not whither; for most part, each following his neighbour, and his own nose.

Nevertheless, not always; look better, you shall find certain that do, in some small degree, *know whither*. Sheep have their Bell-wether; some ram of the folds, endued with more valour, with clearer vision than other sheep; he leads them through the wolds, by height and hollow, to the woods and water-courses, for covert or for pleasant provender; courageously marching, and if need be leaping, and with hoof and horn doing battle, in the van: him they courageously and with assured heart follow. Touching it is, as every herdsman will inform you, with what chivalrous devotedness these woolly Hosts adhere to their Wether; and rush after him, through good report and through bad report, were it into safe shelters and green thymy nooks, or into asphaltic lakes and the jaws of devouring lions. Ever also must we recall that fact which we owe Jean Paul's quick eye: 'If you hold a stick before the Wether, so that he, by necessity, leaps in passing you, and then withdraw your stick, the Flock will nevertheless all leap as he did; and the thousandth sheep shall be found impetuously vaulting over air, as the first did over an otherwise impassable barrier.' Reader, wouldst thou understand Society, ponder well those ovine proceedings; thou wilt find them all curiously significant.

Now if sheep always, how much more must men always, have their Chief, their Guide! Man too is by nature quite thoroughly *gregarious*: nay ever he struggles to be something more, to be

social; not even when Society has become impossible, does that deep-seated tendency and effort forsake him. Man, as if by miraculous magic, imparts his Thoughts, his Mood of mind to man; an unspeakable communion binds all past, present, and future men into one indissoluble whole, almost into one living individual. Of which high, mysterious Truth, this disposition to *imitate*, to lead and be led, this impossibility *not* to imitate, is the most constant, and one of the simplest manifestations. To imitate! which of us all can measure the significance that lies in that one word? By virtue of which the infant Man, born at Woolsthorpe, grows up not to be a hairy Savage, and chewer of Acorns, but an Isaac Newton and Discoverer of Solar Systems!—Thus both in a celestial and terrestrial sense are we a *Flock*, such as there is no other: nay looking away from the base and ludicrous to the sublime and sacred side of the matter (since in every matter there are two sides), have not we also a SHEPHERD, 'if we will but hear his voice'? Of those stupid multitudes there is no one but has an immortal Soul within him; a reflex and living image of God's whole Universe: strangely, from its dim environment, the light of the Highest looks through him;—for which reason, indeed, it is that we claim a brotherhood with him, and so love to know his History, and come into clearer and clearer union with all that he feels, and says, and does.

However, the chief thing to be noted was this: Amid those dull millions, who, as a dull flock, roll hither and thither, whithersoever they are led; and seem all sightless and slavish, accomplishing, attempting little save what the animal instinct in its somewhat higher kind might teach, To keep themselves and their young ones alive,—are scattered here and there superior natures, whose eye is not destitute of free vision, nor their heart of free volition. These latter, therefore, examine and determine, not what others do, but what it is right to do; towards which, and which only, will they, with such force as is given them, resolutely endeavour: for if the Machine, living or inanimate, is merely *fed*, or desires to be fed, and so *works*, the Person can *will*, and so *do*. These are properly our Men, our Great Men; the guides of the dull host,—which follows them as by an irrevocable decree. They are the chosen of the world: they had this rare faculty not only of 'supposing' and 'inclining to think,' but of *knowing* and *believing*; the nature of their being was, that they lived not by Hearsay, but by clear Vision; while others hovered and swam along, in the grand Vanity-fair of the World, blinded by the mere Shows of things, these saw into the Things themselves, and could walk as men having an eternal loadstar, and with their feet on sure paths. Thus was there a *Reality* in their existence; something of a perennial character; in virtue of which indeed it is that the memory of them is perennial. Whoso belongs only to his own age, and reverences only *its* gilt Popinjays or soot-smear'd Mumbojumbos, must needs die with it: though he have been crowned seven times in the Capitol, or seventy-and-seven times, and Rumour have blown his praises to all the four winds, deafening every ear therewith,—it avails not; there was nothing universal, nothing eternal in him; he must fade away, even as the Popinjay-gildings and Scarecrow-apparel, which he could not see through. The great man does, in good truth, belong to his own age; nay more so than any other man; being properly the synopsis and epitome of such age with its interests and influences: but belongs likewise to all ages, otherwise he is not great. What was transitory in him passes away; and an immortal part remains, the significance of which is in strict speech inexhaustible,—as that of every *real* object is. Aloft, conspicuous, on his enduring basis, he stands there, serene, unaltering; silently addresses to every new generation a new lesson and monition. Well is his Life worth writing, worth interpreting; and ever, in the new dialect of new times, of re-writing and re-interpreting.

Of such chosen men was Samuel Johnson: not ranking among the highest, or even the high, yet distinctly admitted into that sacred band; whose existence was no idle Dream, but a Reality which he transacted *awake*; nowise a Clothes-horse and Patent Digester, but a genuine Man. By nature he was gifted for the noblest of earthly tasks, that of Priesthood, and Guidance of mankind; by destiny, moreover, he was appointed to this task, and did actually, according to strength, fulfil the same: so that always the question, *How; in what spirit;*

under what shape? remains for us to be asked and answered concerning him. For as the highest Gospel was a Biography, so is the Life of every good man still an indubitable Gospel, and preaches to the eye and heart and whole man, so that Devils even must believe and tremble, these gladdest tidings: 'Man is heaven-born; not the thrall of Circumstances, of Necessity, but the victorious subduer thereof: behold how he can become the "Announcer of himself and of his Freedom;" and is ever what the Thinker has named him, "the Messias of Nature."—Yes, Reader, all this that thou hast so often heard about 'force of circumstances,' 'the creature of the time,' 'balancing of motives,' and who knows what melancholy stuff to the like purport, wherein thou, as in a nightmare Dream, sittest paralysed, and hast no force left,—was in very truth, if Johnson and waking men are to be credited, little other than a hag-ridden vision of death-sleep; some *half-fact*, more fatal at times than a whole falsehood. Shake it off; awake; up and be doing, even as it is given thee!

The Contradiction which yawns wide enough in every Life, which it is the meaning and task of Life to reconcile, was in Johnson's wider than in most. Seldom, for any man, has the contrast between the ethereal heavenward side of things, and the dark sordid earthward, been more glaring: whether we look at Nature's work with him or Fortune's, from first to last heterogeneity, as of sunbeams and miry clay, is on all hands manifest. Whereby indeed, only this was declared, That *much Life* had been given him; many things to triumph over, a great work to *do*. Happily also he did it; better than the most.

Nature had given him a high, keen-visionsed, almost poetic soul; yet withal imprisoned it in an inert, unsightly body: that could never rest had not limbs that would move with him, but only roll and waddle: the inward eye, all-penetrating, all-embracing, must look through bodily windows that were dim, half-blinded; he so loved men, and 'never once *saw* the human face divine!' Not less did he prize the love of men; he was eminently social; the approbation of his fellows was dear to him, 'valuable,' as he owned, 'if from the meanest of human beings:' yet the first impression he produced on every man was to be one of aversion, almost of disgust. By Nature it was farther ordered that the imperious Johnson should be born poor: the ruler-soul, strong in its native royalty, generous, uncontrollable, like the lion of the woods, was to be housed, then, in such a dwelling-place: of Disfigurement, Disease, and lastly of a Poverty which itself made him the servant of servants. Thus was the born king likewise a born slave: the divine spirit of Music must awake imprisoned amid dull-croaking universal Discords; the Ariel finds himself encased in the coarse hulls of a Caliban. So is it more or less, we know (and thou, O Reader, knowest and feelest even now), with all men: yet with the fewest men in any such degree as with Johnson.

Fortune, moreover, which had so managed his first appearance in the world, lets not her hand lie idle, or turn the other way, but works unweariedly in the same spirit, while he is journeying through the world. What such a mind, stamped of Nature's noblest metal, though in so ungainly a die, was specially and best of all fitted for, might still be a question. To none of the world's few Incorporated Guilds could he have adjusted himself without difficulty, without distortion; in none been a Guild-Brother well at ease. Perhaps, if we look to the strictly practical nature of his faculty, to the strength, decision, method that manifests itself in him, we may say that his calling was rather towards Active than Speculative life; that as Statesman (in the higher, now obsolete sense), Lawgiver, Ruler, in short as Doer of the Work, he had shone even more than as Speaker of the Word. His honesty of heart, his courageous temper, the value he set on things outward and material, might have made him a King among Kings. Had the golden age of those new French Prophets, when it shall be *à chacun selon sa capacité, à chaque capacité selon ses œuvres*, but arrived! Indeed, even in our brazen and Birmingham-lacquer age, he himself regretted that he had not become a Lawyer, and risen to be Chancellor, which he might well have done. However, it was otherwise appointed. To no man does Fortune throw open all the kingdoms of this world, and say: It is thine; choose where thou wilt dwell! To the most she opens hardly the smallest cranny or doghutch, and says, not without asperity: There, that is thine while thou canst keep it; nestle

thymself there, and bless Heaven! Alas, men must fit themselves into many things: some forty years ago, for instance, the noblest and ablest Man in all the British lands might be seen not swaying the royal sceptre, or the pontiff's censer, on the pinnacle of the World, but gauging ale-tubs in the little burgh of Dumfries! Johnson came a little nearer the mark than Burns: but with him too 'Strength was mournfully denied its arena; he too had to fight Fortune at strange odds, all his life long.

Johnson's disposition for *royalty* (had the Fates so ordered it) is well seen in early boyhood. 'His favourites,' says Boswell, 'used to receive very liberal assistance from him; and such was the submission and deference with which he was treated, that three of the boys, of whom Mr. Hector was sometimes one, used to come in the morning as his humble attendants, and carry him to school. One in the middle stooped, while he sat upon his back, and one on each side supported him; and thus was he borne triumphant.' The purfly, sand-blind lubber and blubber, with his open mouth, and face of bruised honeycomb; yet already dominant, imperial, irresistible! Not in the 'King's-chair' (of human arms), as we see, do his three satellites carry him along: rather on the *Tyrant's-saddle*, the back of his fellow-creature, must he ride prosperous!—The child is father of the man. He who had seen fifty years into coming Time, would have felt that little spectacle of mischievous schoolboys to be a great one. For us, who look back on it, and what followed it, now from afar, there arise questions enough: How looked these urchins? What jackets and galligaskins had they; felt headgear, or of dogskin leather! What was old Lichfield doing then; what thinking?—and so on, through the whole series of Corporal Trim's 'auxiliary verbs.' A picture of it all fashions itself together;—only unhappily we have no brush and no fingers.

Boyhood is now past; the ferula of Pedagogue waves harmless, in the distance: Samuel has struggled up to uncouth bulk and youthhood, wrestling with Disease and Poverty, all the way; which two continue still his companions. At College we see little of him; yet thus much, that things went not well. A rugged wildman of the desert, awakened to the feeling of himself; proud as the proudest, poor as the poorest; stoically shut up, silently enduring the incurable: what a world of blackest gloom, with sun-gleams and pale tearful moon-gleams, and flickerings of a celestial and an infernal splendour, was this that now opened for him! But the weather is wintry; and the toes of the man are looking through his shoes. His muddy features grow of a purple and sea-green colour; a flood of black indignation mantling beneath. A truculent, raw-boned figure! Meat he has probably little; hope he has less: his feet, as we said, have come into brotherhood with the cold mire.

'Shall I be particular,' inquires Sir John Hawkins, 'and relate a circumstance of his distress, that cannot be imputed to him as an effect of his own extravagance or irregularity, and consequently reflects no disgrace on his memory? He had scarce any change of raiment, and, in a short time after Corbet left him, but one pair of shoes, and those so old that his feet were seen through them: a gentleman of his college, the father of an eminent clergyman now living, directed a servitor one morning to place a new pair at the door of Johnson's chamber; who seeing them upon his first going out, so far forgot himself and the spirit which must have actuated his unknown benefactor, that, with all the indignation of an insulted man, he threw them away.'

How exceedingly surprising!—the Rev. Dr. Hall remarks: 'As far as we can judge from a cursory view of the weekly account in the buttry-books, Johnson appears to have lived as well as other commoners and scholars.' Alas! such 'cursory view of the buttry-books,' now from the safe distance of a century, in the safe chair of a College Mastership, is one thing; the continual view of the empty or locked buttry itself was quite a different thing. But hear our Knight, how he farther discourages. 'Johnson,' quoth Sir John, could 'not at this early period of his life divest himself of an idea that poverty was disgraceful; and was very severe in his censures of that economy in both our Universities, which exacted at meals the attendance of poor scholars, under the several denominations of Servitors in the one, and Sizars in the other: he thought that the scholar's, like the Christian life, levelled all distinctions of rank and worldly pre-eminence; but in this he was mistaken: civil polity, etc. etc.—Too true! It is man's lot to err.

However, Destiny, in all ways, means to prove the mistaken Samuel, and see what stuff is in him. He must leave these butteries of Oxford, Want like an armed man compelling him; retreat into his father's mean home; and there abandon himself for a season to inaction, disappointment, shame and nervous melancholy nigh run mad; he is probably the wretchedest man in wide England. In all ways he too must 'become perfect through suffering.'—High thoughts have visited him; his College Exercises have been praised beyond the walls of College; Pope himself has seen that *Translation*, and approved of it: Samuel had whispered to himself: I too am 'one and somewhat.' False thoughts; that leave only misery behind! The fever-fire of Ambition is too painfully extinguished (but not cured) in the frost-bath of Poverty. Johnson has knocked at the gate, as one having a right; but there was no opening: the world lies all encircled as with brass; nowhere can he find or force the smallest entrance. An ushership at Market Bosworth, and 'a disagreement between him and Sir Wolstan Dixie, the patron of the school,' yields him bread of affliction and water of affliction; but so bitter, that unassisted human nature cannot swallow them. Young Samson will grind no more in the Philistine mill of Bosworth; quits hold of Sir Wolstan, and the 'domestic chaplaincy, so far at least as to say grace at table,' and also to be 'treated with what he represented as intolerable harshness;' and so, after 'some months of such complicated misery,' feeling doubtless that there are worse things in the world than quick death by Famine, 'relinquishes a situation, which all his life afterwards he recollected with the strongest aversion, and even horror.' Men like Johnson are properly called the Forlorn Hope of the World: judge whether his hope was forlorn or not, by this Letter to a dull oily Printer who called himself *Sylvanus Urban*:

'Sir,—As you appear no less sensible than your readers of the defect of your poetical article, you will not be displeased if (in order to the improvement of it) I communicate to you the sentiments of a person who will undertake, on reasonable terms, sometimes to fill a column.

'His opinion is, that the public world, etc. etc.

'If such a correspondence will be agreeable to you, be pleased to inform me in two posts, what the conditions are on which you shall expect it. Your late offer (for a Prize Poem) gives me no reason to distrust your generosity. If you engage in any literary projects besides this paper, I have other designs to impart.'

Reader, the generous person, to whom this letter goes addressed, is 'Mr. Edmund Cave, at St. John's Gate, London;' the addressor of it is Samuel Johnson, in Birmingham, Warwickshire.

Nevertheless, Life rallies in the man; reasserts its right to be *lived*, even to be enjoyed. 'Better a small bush,' say the Scotch, 'than no shelter:' Johnson learns to be contented with humble human things; and is there not already an actual realised human Existence, all stirring and living on every hand of him? Go thou and do likewise! In Birmingham itself, with his own purchased goose-quill, he can earn 'five guineas;' nay, finally, the choicest terrestrial good: a Friend, who will be Wife to him! Johnson's marriage with the good Widow Porter has been treated with ridicule by many mortals, who apparently had no understanding thereof. That the purblind, seamy-faced Wildman, stalking lonely, woe-stricken, like some Irish Gallowglass with peeled club, whose speech no man knew, whose look all men both laughed at and shuddered at, should find any brave female heart to acknowledge, at first sight and hearing of him, 'This is the most sensible man I ever met with;' and then, with generous courage, to take him to itself, and say, Be thou mine; be thou warmed here, and thawed to life!—in all this, in the kind Widow's love and pity for him, in Johnson's love and gratitude, there is actually no matter for ridicule. Their wedded life, as is the common lot, was made up of drizzle and dry weather; but innocence and worth dwelt in it; and when death had ended it, a certain sacredness: Johnson's deathless affection for his Tetty was always venerable and noble.

However, be all this as it might, Johnson is now minded to wed; and will live by the trade of Pedagogy, for by this also may life be kept in. Let the world therefore take notice: 'At Edial near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded, and taught the Latin and Greek languages, by—SAMUEL JOHNSON.' Had this Edial enterprise prospered, how

different might the issue have been! Johnson had lived a life of unnoticed nobleness, or swoln into some amorphous Dr. Parr, of no avail to us; Bozzy would have dwindled into official insignificance, or risen by some other elevation; old Auchinleck had never been afflicted with 'ane that keeped a schule,' or obliged to violate hospitality by a 'Cromwell do? God, sir, he gart kings ken that there was a *lith* in their neck!'—But the Edial enterprise did not prosper; Destiny had other work appointed for Samuel Johnson; and young gentlemen got board where they could elsewhere find it. This man was to become a Teacher of grown gentlemen, in the most surprising way; a Man of Letters, and Ruler of the British Nation for some time,—not of their bodies merely but of their minds, not *over* them but *in* them.

The career of Literature could not, in Johnson's day, any more than now, be said to lie along the shores of a Pactolus: whatever else might be gathered there, gold-dust was nowise the chief produce. The world, from the times of Socrates, St. Paul, and far earlier, had always had its Teachers; and always treated them in a peculiar way. A shrewd Townclerk (not of Ephesus), once, in founding a Burgh-Seminary, when the question came, How the Schoolmasters should be maintained? delivered this brief counsel: 'D—n them, keep them *poor*!' Considerable wisdom may lie in this aphorism. At all events, we see, the world has acted on it long, and indeed improved on it,—putting many a Schoolmaster of its great Burgh-Seminary to a death which even *cost* it something. The world, it is true, had for some time been too busy to go out of its way, and *put* any Author to death; however, the old sentence pronounced against them was found to be pretty sufficient. The first Writers, being Monks, were sworn to a vow of Poverty; the modern Authors had no need to swear to it. This was an epoch when an Otway could still die of hunger; not to speak of your innumerable Scrogginses, whom 'the Muse found stretched beneath a rug,' with 'rusty grate unconscious of a fire,' stocking-nightcap, sanded floor, and all the other escutcheons of the craft, time out of mind the heir-looms of Authorship. Scroggins, however, seems to have been but an idler; not at all so diligent as worthy Mr. Boyce, whom we might have seen *sitting up* in bed, with his wearing-apparel of Blanket about him, and a hole slit in the same, that his hand might be at liberty to work in its vocation. The worst was, that too frequently a blackguard recklessness of temper ensued, incapable of turning to account what good the gods even here had provided: your Boyces acted on some stoico-epicurean principle of *carpe diem*, as men do in bombarded towns, and seasons of raging pestilence;—and so had lost not only their life, and presence of mind, but their status as persons of respectability. The trade of Author was at about one of its lowest ebbs when Johnson embarked on it.

Accordingly we find no mention of Illuminations in the city of London, when this same ruler of the British Nation arrived in it: no cannon-salvos are fired; no flourish of drums and trumpets greets his appearance on the scene. He enters quite quietly, with some copper halfpence in his pocket; creeps into lodgings in Exeter Street, Strand; and has a Coronation Pontiff also, of not less peculiar equipment, whom, with all submissiveness, he must wait upon, in his Vatican of St. John's Gate. This is the dull oily Printer alluded to above.

'Cave's temper,' says our Knight Hawkins, 'was phlegmatic: though he assumed, as the publisher of the Magazine, the name of Sylvanus Urban, he had few of those qualities that constitute urbanity. Judge of his want of them by this question, which he once put to an author: "Mr. —, I hear you have just published a pamphlet, and am told there is a very good paragraph in it upon the subject of music: did you write that yourself?" His discernment was also slow; and as he had already at his command some writers of prose and verse, who, in the language of Booksellers, are called good hands, he was the backwarder in making advances, or courting an intimacy with Johnson. Upon the first approach of a stranger, his practice was to continue sitting; a posture in which he was ever to be found, and for a few minutes to continue silent: if at any time he was inclined to begin the discourse, it was generally by putting a leaf of the Magazine, then in the press, into the hand of his visitor, and asking his opinion of it.'

He was so incompetent a judge of Johnson's abilities, that meaning at one time to dazzle him with the splendour of some of those luminaries in Literature, who favoured him with their correspondence, he told him that if he would, in the evening, be at a certain alehouse in the neigh-

bourhood of Clerkenwell, he might have a chance of seeing Mr. Browne and another or two of those illustrious contributors: Johnson accepted the invitation; and being introduced by Cave, dressed in a loose horse-man's coat, and such a great bushy wig as he constantly wore, to the sight of Mr. Browne, whom he found sitting at the upper end of a long table, in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, had his curiosity gratified.*

In fact, if we look seriously into the condition of Authorship at that period, we shall find that Johnson had undertaken one of the ruggedest of all possible enterprises; that here as elsewhere Fortune had given him unspeakable Contradictions to reconcile. For a man of Johnson's stamp, the Problem was twofold: *First*, not only as the humble but indispensable condition of all else, to keep himself, if so might be, *alive*; but *secondly*, to keep himself alive by speaking forth the *Truth* that was in him, and speaking it *truly*, that is, in the clearest and fittest utterance the Heavens had enabled him to give it, let the Earth say to this what she liked. Of which twofold Problem if it be hard to solve either member separately, how incalculably more so to solve it when both are conjoined, and work with endless complication into one another! He that finds himself already *kept alive* can sometimes (unhappily not always) speak a little truth; he that finds himself able and willing, to all lengths, to *speak lies*, may, by watching how the wind sits, scrape together a livelihood, sometimes of great splendour: he, again, who finds himself provided with *neither* endowment, has but a ticklish game to play, and shall have praises if he win it. Let us look a little at both faces of the matter; and see what front they then offered our Adventurer, what front he offered them.

At the time of Johnson's appearance on the field, Literature, in many senses, was in a transitional state; chiefly in this sense, as respects the pecuniary subsistence of its cultivators. It was in the very act of passing from the protection of Patrons into that of the Public; no longer to supply its necessities by laudatory Dedications to the Great, but by judicious Bargains with the Booksellers. This happy change has been much sung and celebrated; many a 'lord of the lion heart and eagle eye' looking back with scorn enough on the bygone system of Dependency: so that now it were perhaps well to consider, for a moment, what good might also be in it, what gratitude we owe it. That a good was in it, admits not of doubt. Whatsoever has existed has had its value: without some truth and worth lying in it, the thing could not have hung together, and been the organ and sustenance, and method of action, for men that reasoned and were alive. Translate a Falsehood which is wholly false into Practice, the result comes out *zero*; there is no fruit or issue to be derived from it. That in an age, when a Nobleman was still noble, still with his wealth the protector of worthy and humane things, and still venerated as such, a poor Man of Genius, his brother in nobleness, should, with unfeigned reverence, address him and say: 'I have found Wisdom here, and would fain proclaim it abroad; wilt thou, of thy abundance, afford me the means?'—in all this there was no baseness; it was wholly an honest proposal, which a free man might make, and a free man listen to. So might a Tasso, with a *Gerusalemme* in his hand or in his head, speak to a Duke of Ferrara; so might a Shakespeare to his Southampton; and Continental Artists generally to their rich Protectors,—in some countries, down almost to these days. It was only when the reverence became *feigned*, that baseness entered into the transaction on both sides; and, indeed, flourished there with rapid luxuriance, till that became disgraceful for a Dryden, which a Shakespeare could once practise without offence.

Neither, it is very true, was the new way of Bookseller Mæcenasship worthless; which opened itself at this juncture, for the most important of all transport-trades, now when the old way had become too miry and impassable. Remark, moreover, how this second sort of Mæcenasship, after carrying us through nearly a century of Literary Time, appears now to have wellnigh discharged *its* function also; and to be working pretty rapidly towards some *third* method, the exact conditions of which are yet nowise visible. Thus all things have their end; and we should part with them all, not in anger, but in peace. The Bookseller-system, during its peculiar century, the whole of the eighteenth, did carry us handsomely along; and many good Works it has left us, and many good Men it maintained: if it is now expiring

* Hawkins, pp. 48-50.

by PUFFERY, as the Patronage-System did by FLATTERY (for *Lying* is ever the forerunner of Death, nay is itself Death), let us not forget its benefits; how it nursed Literature through boyhood and school-years, as Patronage had wrapped it in soft swaddling-bands;—till now we see it about to put on the *toga virilis*, could it but find any such!

There is tolerable travelling on the beaten road, run how it may; only on the new road not yet levelled and paved, and on the old road all broken into ruts and quagmires, is the travelling bad or impracticable. The difficulty lies always in the transition from one method to another. In which state it was that Johnson now found Literature; and out of which, let us also say, he manfully carried it. What remarkable mortal first paid copyright in England we have not ascertained; perhaps, for almost a century before, some scarce visible or ponderable pittance of wages had occasionally been yielded by the Seller of Books to the Writer of them: the original Covenant, stipulating to produce *Paradise Lost* on the one hand, and *Five Pounds Sterling* on the other, still lies (we have been told) in black-on-white, for inspection and purchase by the curious, at a Bookshop in Chancery Lane. Thus had the matter gone on, in a mixed confused way, for some threescore years;—as ever, in such things, the old system overlaps the new, by some generation or two, and only dies quite out when the new has got a complete organisation and weather-worthy surface of its own. Among the first Authors, the very first of any significance, who lived by the day's wages of his craft, and composedly faced the world on that basis, was Samuel Johnson.

At the time of Johnson's appearance there were still two ways, on which an Author might attempt proceeding: there were the Mæcenases proper in the West End of London; and the Mæcenases virtual of St. John's Gate and Paternoster Row. To a considerate man it might seem uncertain which method were preferable: neither had very high attractions; the Patron's aid was now wellnigh necessarily polluted by sycophancy, before it could come to hand; the Bookseller's was deformed with greedy stupidity, not to say entire wooden-headedness and disgust (so that an Osborne even required to be knocked down, by an author of spirit), and could barely keep the thread of life together. The one was the wages of suffering and poverty; the other, unless you gave strict heed to it, the wages of sin. In time, Johnson had opportunity of looking into both methods, and ascertaining what they were; but found, at first trial, that the former would in no-wise do for him. Listen, once again, to that far-famed Blast of Doom, proclaiming into the ear of Lord Chesterfield, and, through him, of the listening world, that patronage should be no more!

'Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my Work * through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance,† one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour.'

'The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.'

'Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind: but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary and cannot impart it; till I am known and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity, not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received; or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.'

'Having carried on my Work thus far with so little obligation to any favour of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have long been awakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.'

'My Lord, your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,
'SAM. JOHNSON.'

And thus must the rebellious 'Sam. Johnson' turn him to the Bookselling guild, and the wondrous chaos of 'Author by

* *The English Dictionary.*

† Were time and printer's space of no value, it were easy to wash away certain foolish soot-stains dropped here as 'Notes;' especially two: the one on this word, and on Boswell's Note to it; the other on the paragraph which follows. Let 'Ed.' look a second time; he will find that Johnson's sacred regard for *Truth* is the only thing to be 'noted' in the former case; also, in the latter, that this of 'Love's being a native of the rocks' actually has a 'menning.'

trade;' and, though ushered into it only by that dull oily Printer, 'with loose horseman's coat and such a great bushy wig as he constantly wore,' and only as subaltern to some commanding-officer 'Browne, sitting amid tobacco-smoke at the head of a long table in the alehouse at Clerkenwell,'—gird himself together for the warfare; having no alternative!

Little less contradictory was that other branch of the twofold Problem now set before Johnson: the speaking forth of *Truth*. Nay, taken by itself, it had in those days become so complex as to puzzle strongest heads, with nothing else imposed on them for solution; and even to turn high heads of that sort into mere hollow *vizards*, speaking neither truth nor falsehood, or anything but what the Prompter and Player (*ἵποκριτής*) put into them. Alas! for poor Johnson Contradiction abounded; in spirituals and in temporals, within and without. Born with the strongest unconquerable love of just Insight, he must begin to live and learn in a scene where Prejudice flourishes with rank luxuriance. England was all confused enough, sightless and yet restless, take it where you would; but figure the best intellect in England nursed up to manhood in the idol-cavern of a poor Tradesman's house in the cathedral city of Lichfield! What is Truth? said jesting Pilate. What is Truth? might earnest Johnson much more emphatically say. Truth, no longer, like the Phoenix, in rainbow plumage, poured, from her glittering beak, such tones of sweetest melody as took captive every ear: the Phoenix (waxing old) had wellnigh ceased her singing, and empty wearisome Cuckoos, and doleful monotonous Owls, innumerable Jays also, and twittering Sparrows on the housetop, pretended they were repeating her.

It was wholly a divided age, that of Johnson; Unity existed nowhere, in its Heaven, or in its Earth. Society, through every fibre, was rent asunder: all things, it was then becoming visible, but could not then be understood, were moving onwards, with an impulse received ages before, yet now first with a decisive rapidity, towards that great chaotic gulf, where, whether in the shape of French Revolutions, Reform Bills, or what shape soever, bloody or bloodless, the descent and engulfment assume, we now see them weltering and boiling. Already Cant, as once before hinted, had begun to play its wonderful part, for the hour was come: two ghastly Apparitions, unreal *simulacra* both, HYPOCRISY and ATHEISM, are already, in silence, parting the world. Opinion and Action, which should live together as wedded pair, 'one flesh,' more properly as Soul and Body, have commenced their open quarrel, and are suing for a separate maintenance,—as if they could exist separately. To the earnest mind, in any position, firm footing and a life of Truth was becoming daily more difficult: in Johnson's position it was more difficult than in almost any other.

If, as for a devout nature was inevitable and indispensable, he looked up to Religion, as to the polestar of his voyage, already there was no fixed polestar any longer visible; but two stars, a whole constellation of stars, each proclaiming itself as the true. There was the red portentous comet-star of Infidelity; the dim fixed-star, burning ever dimmer, uncertain now whether not an atmospheric meteor, of Orthodoxy: which of these to choose? The keener intellects of Europe had, almost without exception, ranged themselves under the former: for some half century, it had been the general effort of European speculation to proclaim that the Destruction of Falsehood was the only Truth; daily had Denial waxed stronger and stronger, Belief sunk more and more into decay. From our Bolingbrokes and Tolands the sceptical fever had passed into France, into Scotland; and already it smouldered, far and wide, secretly eating out the heart of England. Bayle had played his part; Voltaire on a wider theatre, was playing his,—Johnson's senior by some fifteen years: Hume and Johnson were children almost of the same year.* To this keener order of intellects did Johnson indisputably belong: was he to join them; was he to oppose them? A complicated question: for, alas, the Church itself is no longer, even to him, wholly of true adamant and baked mud conjoined: the zealously Devout has to find his Church tottering; and pause amazed to see, instead of inspired Priest, many a swine-feeding Trulliber ministering at her altar.

* Johnson, September 1709; Hume, April 1711.

It is not the least curious of the incoherences which Johnson had to reconcile, that, though by nature contemptuous and incredulous, he was at that time of day, to find his safety and glory in defending, with his whole might, the traditions of the elders.

Not less perplexingly intricate, and on both sides hollow or questionable, was the aspect of Politics. Whigs struggling blindly forward, Tories holding blindly back; each with some forecast of a half truth; neither with any forecast of the whole! Admire here this other Contradiction in the life of Johnson; that, though the most ungovernable, and in practice the most independent of men, he must be a Jacobite, and worshipper of the Divine Right. In Politics also there are Irreconcilables enough for him. As, indeed, how could it be otherwise? For when Religion is torn asunder, and the very heart of man's existence set against itself, then in all subordinate departments there must needs be hollowness, incoherence. The English Nation had rebelled against a Tyrant; and, by the hands of religious tyrannicides, exacted stern vengeance of him: Democracy had risen iron-sinewed, and, 'like an infant Hercules, strangled serpents in its cradle.' But as yet none knew the meaning or extent of the phenomenon: Europe was not ripe for it; not to be ripened for it but by the culture and various experience of another century and a half. And now, when the King-killers were all swept away, and a milder *second* picture was painted over the canvas of the *first*, and betitled 'Glorious Revolution,' who doubted but the catastrophe was over, the whole business finished, and Democracy gone to its long sleep? Yet was it like a business finished and not finished; a lingering uneasiness dwelt in all minds: the deep-lying, resistless Tendency, which had still to be *obeyed*, could no longer be *recognised*; thus was there halfness, insincerity, uncertainty in men's ways; instead of heroic Puritans and heroic Cavaliers, came now a dawdling set of argumentative Whigs; and a dawdling set of deaf-eared Tories; each half-foolish, each half-false. The Whigs were false and without basis; inasmuch as their whole object was Resistance, Criticism, Demolition,—they knew not why, or towards what issue. In Whiggism, ever since a Charles and his Jeffries had ceased to meddle with it, and to have any Russel or Sydney to meddle with, there could be no divineness of character; not till, in these latter days, it took the figure of a thorough-going, all-defying Radicalism, was there any solid footing for it to stand on. Of the like uncertain, half-hollow nature had Toryism become, in Johnson's time; preaching forth indeed an everlasting truth, the duty of Loyalty; yet now, ever since the final expulsion of the Stuarts, having no *Person*, but only an *Office* to be loyal to; no living *Soul* to worship, but only a dead velvet-cushioned *Chair*. Its attitude, therefore, was stiff-necked refusal to move; as that of Whiggism was clamorous command to move,—let rhyme and reason, on both hands, say to it what they might. The consequence was: Immeasurable floods of contentious jargon, tending nowhither; false conviction; false resistance to conviction; decay (ultimately to become decrease) of whatsoever was once understood by the words, *Principle*, or *Honesty* of heart; the louder and louder triumph of *Halfness* and *Plausibility* over *Wholeness* and *Truth*;—at last, this all-overshadowing efflorescence of QUACKERY, which we now see, with all its deadening and killing fruits, in all its innumerable branches, down to the lowest. How, between these jarring extremes, wherein the rotten lay so inextricably intermingled with the sound, and as yet no eye could see through the ulterior meaning of the matter, was a faithful and true man to adjust himself?

That Johnson, in spite of all drawbacks, adopted the Conservative side; stationed himself as the unyielding opponent of Innovation, resolute to hold fast the form of sound words, could not but increase, in no small measure, the difficulties he had to strive with. We mean, the *moral* difficulties; for in *economical* respects, it might be pretty equally balanced; the Tory servant of the Public had perhaps about the same chance of promotion as the Whig: and all the promotion Johnson aimed at was the privilege *to live*. But, for what, though unavowed, was no less indispensable, for his peace of conscience, and the clear ascertainment and feeling of his Duty as an inhabitant of God's world, the case was hereby rendered much more complex. To resist

Innovation is easy enough on one condition: that you resist Inquiry. This is, and was, the common expedient of your common Conservatives; but it would not do for Johnson: he was a zealous recommender and practiser of Inquiry; once for all, could not and would not believe, much less speak and act, a Falsehood: the *form* of sound words, which he held fast, must have a *meaning* in it. Here lay the difficulty: to behold a portentous mixture of True and False, and feel that he must dwell and fight there; yet to love and defend only the True. How worship, when you cannot and will not be an idolater; yet cannot help discerning that the Symbol of your Divinity has half become idolatrous? This was the question, which Johnson, the man both of clear eye and devout believing heart, must answer,—at peril of his life. The Whig or Sceptic, on the other hand, had a much simpler part to play. To him only the idolatrous side of things, nowise the divine one, lay visible: not *worship*, therefore, nay in the strict sense not heart-honesty, is required of him. What spiritual force is his, he can conscientiously employ in the work of cavilling, of pulling-down what is False. For the rest, that there is or can be any Truth of a higher than sensual nature, has not occurred to him. The utmost, therefore, that he as man has to aim at, is RESPECTABILITY, the suffrages of his fellow-men. Such suffrages he may weigh as well as count: or count only: according as he is a Burke or a Wilkes. But beyond these there lies nothing divine for him; these attained, all is attained. Thus is his whole world distinct and rounded-in; a clear goal is set before him; a firm path, rougher or smoother; at worst a firm region wherein to seek a path: let him gird up his loins, and travel on without misgivings! For the honest Conservative, again, nothing is distinct, nothing rounded-in: RESPECTABILITY can nowise be his highest Godhead; not one aim, but two conflicting aims to be continually reconciled by him, has he to strive after. A difficult position, as we said; which accordingly the most did, even in those days, but half defend: by the surrender, namely, of their own too cumbersome *honesty*, or even *understanding*; after which the completest defence was worth little. Into this difficult position Johnson, nevertheless, threw himself: found it indeed full of difficulties; yet held it out manfully, as an honest-hearted, open-sighted man, while life was in him.

Such was that same 'twofold Problem' set before Samuel Johnson. Consider all these moral difficulties; and add to them the fearful aggravation, which lay in that other circumstance, that he needed a continual appeal to the Public, must continually produce a certain impression and conviction on the Public; that if he did not, he ceased to have 'provision for the day that was passing over him,' he could not any longer live! How a vulgar character, once launched into this wild element; driven onwards by Fear and Famine; without other aim than to clutch what Provender (of Enjoyment in any kind) he could get, always if possible keeping *quite* clear of the Gallows and Pillory, that is to say, minding heedfully both 'person' and 'character,'—would have floated hither and thither in it; and contrived to eat some three repasts daily, and wear some three suits yearly, and then to depart and disappear, having consumed his last ration: all this might be worth knowing, but were in itself a trivial knowledge. How a noble man, resolute for the Truth, to whom Shams and Lies were once for all an abomination, was to act in it: *here* lay the mystery. By what methods, by what gifts of eye and hand, does a heroic Samuel Johnson, now when cast forth, into that waste Chaos of Authorship, maddest of things, a mingled Phlegethon and Fleet-ditch, with its floating lumber, and sea-krakens, and mud-spectres,—shape himself a voyage; of the *transient* driftwood, and the *enduring* iron, build him a sea-worthy Life-boat, and sail therein, undrowned, unpolluted, through the roaring 'mother of dead dogs,' onwards to an eternal Landmark, and City that hath foundations? This high question is even the one answered in Boswell's Book; which Book we therefore, not so falsely, have named a *Heroic Poem*; for in it there lies the whole argument of such. Glory to our brave Samuel. He accomplished this wonderful Problem; and now through long generations we point to him, and say: Here also was a Man; let the world once more have assurance of a Man!

Had there been in Johnson, now when afloat on that confusion worse founded of grandeur and squalor, no light but an earthly outward one, he too must have made shipwreck. With

tion, is his appointed ballast and life-burden; he 'could not remember the day he had passed free from pain.' Nevertheless, Life, as we said before, is always Life: a healthy soul, imprison it as you will, in squalid garrets, shabby coat, bodily sickness, or whatever else, will assert its heaven-granted indefeasible Freedom, its right to conquer difficulties, to do work, even to feel gladness. Johnson does not whine over his existence, but manfully makes the most and best of it. 'He said, a man might live in a garret at eightpence a-week: few people would inquire where he lodged; and if they did, it was easy to say: "Sir, I am to be found at such a place." By spending threepence in a coffee-house, he might be for some hours every day in very good company; he might dine for sixpence, breakfast on bread-and-milk for a penny, and do without supper. On *clean-shirt day* he went abroad and paid visits.' Think by whom and of whom this was uttered, and ask then, Whether there is more pathos in it than in a whole circulating-library of *Giaours* and *Harolds*, or less pathos? On another occasion, 'when Dr. Johnson, one day, read his own Satire, in which the life of a scholar is painted, with the various obstructions thrown in his way to fortune and to fame, he burst into a passion of tears: Mr. Thrale's family and Mr. Scott only were present, who, in a jocosse way, clapped him on the back, and said: "What's all this, my dear sir? Why, you and I and *Hercules*, you know, were all troubled with *melancholy*." He was a very large man, and made-out the triumvirate with Johnson and *Hercules* comically enough.' These were sweet tears; the sweet victorious remembrance lay in them of toils indeed frightful, yet never flinched from, and now triumphed over. 'One day it shall delight you also to remember labour done!'—Neither, though Johnson is obscure and poor, need the highest enjoyment of existence, that of heart freely communing with heart, be denied him. Savage and he wander homeless through the streets; without bed, yet not without friendly converse; such another conversation not, it is like, producible in the proudest drawing-room of London. Nor, under the void Night, upon the hard pavement, are their own woes the only topic: nowise; they 'will stand by their country,' they there, the two 'Backwoodsmen' of the Brick Desert!

Of all outward evils Obscurity is perhaps in itself the least. To Johnson, as to a healthy-minded man, the fantastic article, sold or given under the title of *Fame*, had little or no value but its intrinsic one. He prized it as the means of getting him employment and good wages; scarcely as anything more. His light and guidance came from a loftier source; of which, in honest aversion to all hypocrisy or pretentious talk, he spoke not to men; nay perhaps, being of a *healthy* mind, had never spoken to himself. We reckon it a striking fact in Johnson's history, this carelessness of his to *Fame*. Most authors speak of their 'Fame' as if it were a quite priceless matter; the grand ultimatum, and heavenly Constantine's-Banner they had to follow, and conquer under.—Thy 'Fame'! Unhappy mortal, where will it and thou both be in some fifty years? Shakespeare himself has lasted but two hundred; Homer (partly by accident) three thousand: and does not already an ETERNITY encircle every *Me* and every *Thee*? Cease, then, to sit feverishly hatching on that 'Fame' of thine; and flapping and shrieking with fierce hisses, like brood-goose on her last egg, if man shall or dare approach it! Quarrel not with me, hate me not, my Brother: make what thou canst of thy egg, and welcome: God knows, I will not steal it; I believe it to be *addle*.—Johnson, for his part, was no man to be killed by a review; concerning which matter, it was said by a benevolent person: If any author *can* be reviewed to death, let it be, with all convenient despatch, *done*. Johnson thankfully receives any word spoken in his favour: is nowise disoblged by a lampoon, but will look at it, if pointed out to him, and show how it might have been done better: the lampoon itself is indeed *nothing*, a soap-bubble that next moment will become a drop of sour suds; but in the meanwhile, if it do anything, it keeps him more in the world's eye, and the next *bargain* will be all the richer: 'Sir, if they should cease to talk of me, I must starve.' Sound heart and understanding head: these fail no man, not even a Man of Letters!

Obscurity, however, was, in Johnson's case, whether a light or heavy evil, likely to be no lasting one. He is animated by the spirit of a true *workman*, resolute to do his work well; and

he *does* his work well; all his work, that of writing, that of living. A man of this stamp is unhappily not so common in the literary or in any other department of the world, that he can continue always unnoticed. By slow degrees, Johnson emerges; looming, at first, huge and dim in the eye of an observant few; at last disclosed, in his real proportions, to the eye of the whole world, and encircled with a 'light-nimbus' of glory, so that whose is not blind must and shall behold him. By slow degrees, we said; for this also is notable; slow but sure: as his fame waxes not by exaggerated clamour of what he *seems* to be, but by better and better insight of what he *is*, so it will last and stand wearing, being genuine. Thus indeed it is always, or nearly always, with true fame. The heavenly Luminary rises amid vapours; stargazers enough must scan it with critical telescopes; it makes no blazing, the world can either look at it, or forbear looking at it; not till after a time and times does its celestial eternal nature become indubitable. Pleasant, on the other hand, is the blazing of a Tarbarrel; the crowd dance merrily round it, with loud huzzaing, universal three-times-three, and, like Homer's peasants, 'bless the useful light:' but unhappily it so soon ends in darkness, foul choking smoke; and is kicked into the gutters, a nameless imbrogllo of charred staves, pitch-cinders and *vomissement du diable*!

But indeed, from of old, Johnson has enjoyed all, or nearly all, that *Fame* can yield any man: the respect, the obedience of those that are about him and inferior to him; of those whose opinion alone can have any forcible impression on him. A little circle gathers round the Wise man; which gradually enlarges as the report thereof spreads, and more can come to see and to believe; for Wisdom is precious, and of irresistible attraction to all. 'An inspired-idiot,' Goldsmith, hangs strangely about him; though, as Hawkins says, 'he loved not Johnson, but rather envied him for his parts; and once entreated a friend to desist from praising him, "for in doing so," said he, "you harrow-up my very soul!"' Yet, on the whole, there is no evil in the 'gooseberry-fool;' but rather much good; of a finer, if of a weaker, sort than Johnson's; and all the more genuine that he himself could never become *conscious* of it,—though unhappily never cease *attempting* to become so: the Author of the genuine *Vicar of Wakefield*, will he, will he, must needs fly towards such a mass of genuine Manhood; and Dr. Minor keep gyrating round Dr. Major, alternately attracted and repelled. Then there is the chivalrous Topham Beauclerk, with his sharp wit, and gallant courtly ways: there is Bennet Langton, an orthodox gentleman, and worthy; though Johnson once laughed, louder almost than mortal, at his last will and testament; and 'could not stop his merriment, but continued it all the way till he got without the Temple-gate; then burst into such a fit of laughter that he appeared to be almost in a convulsion; and, in order to support himself, laid hold of one of the posts at the side of the foot-pavement, and sent forth peals so loud that, in the silence of the night, his voice seemed to resound from Temple-bar to Fleet-ditch!' Lastly comes his solid-thinking, solid-feeding Thrale, the well-beloved man; with *Thralia*, a bright papilionaceous creature, whom the elephant loved to play with, and wave to and fro upon his trunk. Not to speak of a reverend Bozzy, for what need is there farther?—Or of the spiritual Luminaries, with tongue or pen, who made that age remarkable; or of Highland Lairds drinking, in fierce usquebaugh, 'Your health, Tector Shonson!'—Still less of many such us that poor 'Mr. F. Lewis,' older in date, of whose birth, death and whole terrestrial *res geste*, this only, and strange enough this actually, survives: 'Sir, he lived in London, and hung loose upon society!' *Stut PARVI nominis umbra*.—

In his fifty-third year he is benefited, by the royal bounty, with a Pension of three-hundred pounds. Loud clamour is always more or less insane: but probably the insanest of all loud clamours in the eighteenth century was this that was raised about Johnson's Pension. Men seem to be led by the noses: but in reality, it is by the ears,—as some ancient slaves were, who had their ears bored; or as some modern quadrupeds may be, whose ears are long. Very falsely was it said, 'Names do not change Things.' Names do change Things; nay, for most part they are the only substance which mankind can discern in Things. The whole sum that Johnson, during the remaining twenty-two years of his life, drew from the

public funds of England, would have supported some Supreme Priest for about half as many weeks; it amounts very nearly to the revenue of our poorest Church-Overseer for one twelvemonth. Of secular Administrators of Provinces, and Horse-subduers, and Game-destroyers, we shall not so much as speak: but who were the Primates of England, and the Primates of All England, during Johnson's days? No man has remembered. Again, is the Primate of all England something, or is he nothing? If something, then what but the man who, in the supreme degree, teaches and spiritually edifies, and leads towards Heaven by guiding wisely through the Earth, the living souls that inhabit England? We touch here upon deep matters; which but remotely concern us, and might lead us into still deeper: clear, in the meanwhile, it is that the true Spiritual Edifier and Soul's-Father of all England was, and till very lately continued to be, the man named Samuel Johnson,—whom this scot-and-lot-paying world cackled reproachfully to see remunerated like a Supervisor of Excise!

If Destiny had beaten hard on poor Samuel, and did never cease to visit him too roughly, yet the last section of his Life might be pronounced victorious, and on the whole happy. He was not idle; but now no longer goaded-on by want; the light which had shone irradiating the dark haunts of Poverty, now illuminates the circles of Wealth, of a certain culture and elegant intelligence; he who had once been admitted to speak with Edmund Cave and Tobacco Browne, now admits a Reynolds and a Burke to speak with him. Loving friends are there; Listeners, even Answerers: the fruit of his long labours lies round him in fair legible Writings, of Philosophy, Eloquence, Morality, Philology; some excellent, all worthy and genuine Works; for which too, a deep, earnest murmur of thanks reaches him from all ends of his Fatherland. Nay there are works of Goodness, of undying Mercy, which even he has possessed the power to do: 'What I gave I have; what I spent I had!' Early friends had long sunk into the grave; yet in his soul they ever lived, fresh and clear, with soft pious breathings towards them, not without a still hope of one day meeting them again in purer union. Such was Johnson's Life: the victorious Battle of a free, true Man. Finally he died the death of the free and true: a dark cloud of Death, solemn and not untinged with haloes of immortal Hope, 'took him away,' and our eyes could no longer behold him; but can still behold the trace and impress of his courageous honest spirit, deep-legible in the World's Business, wheresoever he walked and was.

To estimate the quantity of Work that Johnson performed, how much poorer the World were had it wanted him, can, as in all such cases, never be accurately done; cannot, till after some longer space be approximately done. All work is as seed sown; it grows and spreads, and sows itself anew, and so, in endless palingenesia, lives and works. To Johnson's Writings, good and solid, and still profitable as they are, we have already rated his Life and Conversation as superior. By the one and by the other, who shall compute what effects have been produced, and are still, and into deep Time, producing?

So much, however, we can already see: It is now some three quarters of a century that Johnson has been the Prophet of the English; the man by whose light the English people, in public and in private, more than by any other man's, have guided their existence. Higher light than that immediately *practical* one; higher virtue than an honest PRUDENCE, he could not then communicate; nor perhaps could they have received: such light, such virtue, however, he did communicate. How to thread this labyrinthine Time, the fallen and falling Ruin of Times; to silence vain Scruples, hold firm to the last the fragments of old Belief, and with earnest eye still discern some glimpses of a true path, and go forward thereon, 'in a world where there is much to be done, and little to be known:' this is what Samuel Johnson, by act and word, taught his Nation; what his Nation received and learned of him, more than of any other. We can view him as the preserver and transmitter of whatsoever was genuine in the spirit of Toryism; which genuine spirit, it is now becoming manifest, must again embody itself in all new forms of Society, be they what they may, that are to exist, and have continuance—elsewhere than on Paper. The *last* in many things, Johnson

was the last genuine Tory; the last of Englishmen who, with strong voice and wholly-believing heart, preached the Doctrine of Standing-still; who, without selfishness or slavishness, revered the existing Powers, and could assert the privileges of rank, though himself poor, neglected and plebeian; who had heart-devoutness with heart-hatred of cant, was orthodox-religious with his eyes open; and in all things and everywhere spoke out in plain English, from a soul wherein jesuitism could find no harbour, and with the front and tone not of a diplomatist but of a man.

The last of the Tories was Johnson: not Burke, as is often said; Burke was essentially a Whig, and only, on reaching the verge of the chasm towards which Whiggism from the first was inevitably leading, recoiled; and, like a man vehement rather than earnest, a resplendent far-sighted Rhetorician rather than a deep sure Thinker, recoiled with no measure, convulsively, and damaging what he drove back with him.

In a world which exists by the balance of Antagonisms, the respective merit of the Conservator and the Innovator must ever remain debatable. Great, in the mean while, and undoubted for both sides, is the merit of him who, in a day of Change, walks wisely, honestly. Johnson's aim was in itself an impossible one: this of stemming the eternal Flood of Time; of clutching all things, and anchoring them down, and saying, Move not!—how could it or should it, ever have success? The strongest man can but retard the current partially and for a short hour. Yet even in such shortest retardation may not an inestimable value lie? If England has escaped the blood-bath of a French Revolution; and may yet, in virtue of this delay and of the experience it has given, work out her deliverance calmly into a new Era, let Samuel Johnson, beyond all contemporary or succeeding men, have the praise for it. We said above that he was appointed to be Ruler of the British Nation for a season; whose will look beyond the surface, into the heart of the world's movements, may find that all Pitt Administrations, and Continental Subsidies, and Waterloo victories, rested on the possibility of making England, yet a little while, *Toryish*, Loyal to the Old; and this again on the anterior reality, that the Wise had found such Loyalty still practicable, and recommendable. England had its Hume, as France had its Voltaires and Diderots; but the Johnson was peculiar to us.

If we ask now, by what endowment it mainly was that Johnson realised such a Life for himself and others; what quality of character the main phenomena of his Life may be most naturally deduced from, and his other qualities most naturally subordinated to, in our conception of him, perhaps the answer were: The quality of Courage, of Valour; that Johnson was a Brave Man. The Courage that can go forth, once and away, to Chalk-Farm, and have itself shot, and snuffed out, with decency, is nowise wholly what we mean here. Such courage we indeed esteem an exceeding small matter; capable of coexisting with a life full of falsehood, feebleness, poltroonery and despicability. Nay oftener it is Cowardice rather that produces the result: for consider, Is the Chalk-Farm Pistoleer inspired with any reasonable Belief and Determination; or is he hounded-on by haggard indefinable Fear,—how he will be *cut* at public places, and 'plucked geese of the neighbourhood' will wag their tongues at him a plucked goose? If he go then, and be shot without shrieking or audible uproar, it is well for him: nevertheless there is nothing amazing in it. Courage to manage all this has not perhaps been denied to any man, or to any woman. Thus, do not recruiting sergeants drum through the streets of manufacturing towns, and collect ragged losels enough; every one of whom, if once dressed in red, and trained a little, will receive fire cheerfully for the small sum of one shilling *per diem*, and have the soul blown out of him at last, with perfect propriety? The Courage that dares only *die* is on the whole no sublime affair; necessary indeed, yet universal; pitiful when it begins to parade itself. On this Globe of ours there are some thirty-six persons that manifest it, seldom with the smallest failure, during every second of time. Nay look at Newgate: do not the offscourings of Creation, when condemned to the gallows as if they were not men but vermin, walk thither with decency, and even to the scowls and hootings of the whole Universe, give their stern good-night in silence? What is to be undergone only

once, we may undergo; what must be, comes almost of its own accord. Considered as Duellist, what a poor figure does the fiercest Irish Whiskerando make in comparison with any English Game-cock, such as you may buy for fifteenpence!

The Courage we desire and prize is not the Courage to die decently, but to live manfully. This, when by God's grace it has been given, lies deep in the soul; like genial heat, fosters all other virtues and gifts; without it they could not live. In spite of our innumerable Waterloos and Peterloos, and such campaigning as there has been, this Courage we allude to, and call the only true one, is perhaps rarer in these last ages than it has been in any other since the Saxon Invasion under Hengist. Altogether extinct it can never be among men; otherwise the species Man were no longer for this world: here and there, in all times, under various guises, men are sent hither not only to demonstrate but exhibit it, and testify, as from heart to heart, that it is still possible, still practicable.

Johnson, in the eighteenth century, and as Man of Letters, was one of such; and, in good truth, 'the bravest of the brave.' What mortal could have more to war with? Yet, as we saw, he yielded not, faltered not; he fought, and even, such was his blessedness, prevailed. Whoso will understand what it is to have a man's heart may find that, since the time of John Milton, no braver heart had beat in any English bosom than Samuel Johnson now bore. Observe too that he never called himself brave, never felt himself to be so; the more completely *was* so. No Giant Despair, no Golgotha Death-dance or Sorcerer's-Sabbath of 'Literary Life in London,' appals this pilgrim; he works resolutely for deliverance; in still defiance steps stoutly along. The thing that is given him to do, he can make himself do; what is to be endured, he can endure in silence.

How the great soul of old Samuel, consuming daily his own bitter unalleviable allotment of misery and toil, shows beside the poor flimsy little soul of young Boswell; one day flaunting in the ring of vanity, tarrying by the wine-cup and crying Aha, the wine is red; the next day deploring his downpressed, night-shaded, quite poor estate, and thinking it unkind that the whole movement of the Universe should go on, while *his* digestive-apparatus had stopped! We reckon Johnson's 'talent of silence' to be among his great and too rare gifts. Where there is nothing farther to be done, there shall nothing farther be said: like his own poor blind Welshwoman, he accomplished somewhat, and also 'endured fifty years of wretchedness with unshaken fortitude.' How grim was Life to him; a sick Prison-house and Doubting-castle! 'His great business,' he would profess, 'was to escape from himself.' Yet towards all this he has taken his position and resolution; can dismiss it all 'with frigid indifference, having little to hope or to fear.' Friends are stupid, and pusillanimous, and parsimonious; 'wearied of his stay, yet offended at his departure:' it is the manner of the world. 'By popular delusion,' remarks he with a gigantic calmness, 'illiterate writers will rise into renown:' it is portion of the History of English Literature; a perennial thing, this same popular delusion; and will—alter the character of the Language.

Closely connected with this quality of Valour, partly as springing from it, partly as protected by it, are the more recognisable qualities of Truthfulness in word and thought, and Honesty in action. There is a reciprocity of influence here: for as the realising of Truthfulness and Honesty is the life-light and great aim of Valour, so without Valour they cannot, in anywise, be realised. Now, in spite of all practical shortcomings, no one that sees into the significance of Johnson will say that his prime object was not Truth. In conversation, doubtless, you may observe him, on occasion, fighting as if for victory;—and must pardon these ebulliences of a careless hour, which were not without temptation and provocation. Remark likewise two things: that such prize-arguings were ever on merely superficial debatable questions; and then that they were argued generally by the fair laws of battle and logic-fence, by one cunning in that same. If their purpose was excusable, their effect was harmless, perhaps beneficial; that of taming noisy mediocrity, and showing it another side of a debatable matter; to see *both* sides of which was, for the first time to see the Truth of it. In his Writings themselves are errors enough, crabbed prepossessions enough; yet these also of a quite extraneous and accidental nature, nowhere a

wilful shutting of the eyes to the Truth. Nay, is there not everywhere a heartfelt discernment, singular, almost admirable, if we consider through what confused conflicting lights and hallucinations it had to be attained, of the highest everlasting Truth, and beginning of all Truths: this namely, that man is ever, and even in the age of Wilkes and Whitefield, a Revelation of God to man; and lives, moves, and has his being in Truth only; is either true, or, in strict speech, *is* not at all?

Quite spotless, on the other hand, is Johnson's love of Truth, if we look at it as expressed in Practice, as what we have named Honesty of action. 'Clear your mind of Cant;' *clear* it, throw Cant utterly away: such was his emphatic, repeated precept; and did not he himself faithfully conform to it? The Life of this man has been, as it were, turned inside out, and examined with microscopes by friend and foe; yet was there no Lie found in him. His Doings and Writings are not *shows* but *performances*: you may weigh them in the balance, and they will stand weight. Not a line, not a sentence is dishonestly done, is other than it pretends to be. Alas! and he wrote not out of inward inspiration, but to earn his wages: and with that grand perennial tide of 'popular delusion' flowing by; in whose waters he nevertheless refused to fish, to whose rich oyster-beds the dive was too muddy for him. Observe, again, with what innate hatred of Cant, he takes for himself, and offers to others, the lowest possible view of his business, which he followed with such nobleness. Motive for writing he had none, as he often said, but money; and yet he wrote *so*. Into the region of Poetic Art he indeed never rose; there was no *ideal* without him avowing itself in his work: the nobler was that unavowed *ideal* which lay within him, and commanded saying, Work out thy Artisan-ship in the spirit of an Artist! They who talk loudest about the dignity of Art, and fancy that they too are Artistic guild-brethren, and of the Celestials,—let them consider well what manner of man this was, who felt himself to be only a hired day-labourer. A labourer that was worthy of his hire; that has laboured not as an eye-servant, but as one found faithful! Neither was Johnson in those days perhaps wholly a unique. Time was when, for money, you might have ware: and needed not, in all departments, in that of the Epic Poem, in that of the Blacking-bottle, to rest content with the mere *persuasion* that you had ware. It was a happier time. But as yet the seventh Apocalyptic Bladder (of PUFFERY) had not been rent open,—to whirl and grind, as in a West-Indian Tornado, all earthly trades and things into wreck, and dust, and consummation,—and regeneration. Be it quickly, since it must be!—

That Mercy can dwell only with Valour, is an old sentiment or proposition; which in Johnson again receives confirmation. Few men on record have had a more merciful, tenderly affectionate nature than old Samuel. He was called the Bear; and did indeed too often look, and roar, like one; being forced to it in his own defence: yet within that shaggy exterior of his there beat a heart warm as a mother's, soft as a little child's. Nay generally, his very roaring was but the anger of affection: the rage of a Bear, if you will; but of a Bear bereaved of her whelps. Touch his Religion, glance at the Church of England, or the Divine Right; and he was upon you! These things were his Symbols of all that was good and precious for men; his very Ark of the Covenant: whose laid hand on them tore asunder his heart of hearts. Not out of hatred to the opponent, but of love to the thing opposed, did Johnson grow cruel, fiercely contradictory: this is an important distinction; never to be forgotten in our censure of his conversational outrages. But observe also with what humanity, what openness of love, he can attach himself to all things: to a blind old woman, to a Doctor Levett, to a cat 'Hodge.' 'His thoughts in the latter part of his life were frequently employed on his deceased friends; he often muttered these or suchlike sentences: "Poor man! and then he died." How he patiently converts his poor home into a Lazaretto; endures, for long years, the contradiction of the miserable and unreasonable; with him unconnected, save that they had no other to yield them refuge! Generous old man! Worldly possession he has little; yet of this he gives freely; from his own hard-earned shilling, the halfpence for the poor, that 'waited his coming out,' are not withheld: the poor 'waited the coming out' of one not quite so poor! A Sterne can write sentimentalities on Dead Asses: Johnson has a rough voice,

but he finds the wretched Daughter of Vice fallen down in the streets; carries her home on his own shoulders, and like a good Samaritan gives help to the help-needing, worthy or unworthy. Ought not Charity, even in that sense, to cover a multitude of sins? No Penny-a-week Committee-Lady, no manager of Soup-Kitchens, dancer at Charity-Balls, was this rugged, stern-visaged man: but where, in all England, could there have been found another soul so full of Pity, a hand so heavenlike bounteous as his! The widow's mite, we know, was greater than all the other gifts.

Perhaps it is this divine feeling of Affection, throughout manifested, that principally attracts us towards Johnson. A true brother of men is he; and filial lover of the Earth; who, with little bright spots of Attachment, 'where lives and works some loved one,' has beautified 'this rough solitary Earth into a peopled garden.' Lichfield, with its mostly dull and limited inhabitants, is to the last one of the sunny islets for him: *Salve magna parens!* Or read those Letters on his Mother's death: what a genuine solemn grief and pity lies recorded there; a looking back into the Past, unspeakably mournful, unspeakably tender. And yet calm, sublime; for he must now act, not look: his venerated Mother has been taken from him; but he must now write a *Rasselas* to defray her funeral! Again in this little incident, recorded in his Book of Devotion, are not the tones of sacred Sorrow and Greatness deeper than in many a blank-verse Tragedy;—as, indeed, 'the fifth act of a Tragedy,' though unrhymed, does 'lie in every death-bed, were it a peasant's, and of straw.'

'Sunday, October 18, 1767. Yesterday, at about ten in the morning, I took my leave forever of my dear old friend, Catherine Chambers, who came to live with my mother about 1724, and has been but little parted from us since. She buried my father, my brother, and my mother. She is now fifty-eight years old.

'I desired all to withdraw; then told her that we were to part forever; that as Christians, we should part with prayer; and that I would, if she was willing, say a short prayer beside her. She expressed great desire to hear me; and held up her poor hands as she lay in bed, with great fervour, while I prayed kneeling by her.

'I then kissed her. She told me that to part was the greatest pain she had ever felt, and that she hoped we should meet again in a better place. I expressed, with swelled eyes and great emotion of tenderness, the same hopes. We kissed and parted; I humbly hope, to meet again, and to part no more.'

Tears trickling down the granite rock: a soft well of Pity springs within!—Still more tragical is this other scene: 'Johnson mentioned that he could not in general accuse himself of having been an undutiful son. "Once, indeed," said he, "I was disobedient: I refused to attend my father to Uttoxeter market. Pride was the source of that refusal, and the remembrance of it was painful. A few years ago I desired to atone for this fault."—But by what method?—What method was now possible? Hear it; the words are again given as his own, though here evidently by a less capable reporter:

'Madam, I beg your pardon for the abruptness of my departure in the morning, but I was compelled to it by conscience. Fifty years ago, Madam, on this day, I committed a breach of filial piety. My father had been in the habit of attending Uttoxeter market, and opening a stall there for the sale of his Books. Confining by indisposition, he desired me, that day, to go and attend the stall in his place. My pride prevented me; I gave my father a refusal.—And now today I have been at Uttoxeter; I went into the market at the time of business, uncovered my head, and stood with it bare, for an hour, on the spot where my father's stall used to stand. In contrition I stood, and I hope the penance was expiatory.'

Who does not figure to himself this spectacle, amid the 'rainy weather, and the sneers,' or wonder, 'of the bystanders'? The memory of old Michael Johnson, rising from the far distance; sad-beckoning in the 'moonlight of memory:' how he had toiled faithfully hither and thither; patiently among the lowest of the low; been buffeted and beaten down, yet ever risen again, ever tried it anew—And oh, when the wearied old man, as Bookseller, or Hawker, or Tinker, or whatsoever it was that Fate had reduced him to, begged help of thee for one day,—how savage, diabolic, was that mean Vanity, which answered, No! He sleeps now; after life's fitful fever, he sleeps well: but thou, O Merciless, how now wilt thou still the sting of that remembrance?—The picture of Samuel Johnson standing bareheaded in the market there, is one of the grandest and saddest we can paint. Repentance!

Repentance! he proclaims, as with passionate sobs: but only to the ear of Heaven, if Heaven will give him audience: the earthly ear and heart, that should have heard it, are now closed, unresponsive forever.

That this so keen-loving, soft-trembling Affectionateness, the inmost essence of his being, must have looked forth, in one form or another, through Johnson's whole character, practical and intellectual, modifying both, is not to be doubted. Yet through what singular distortions and superstitions, moping melancholies, blind habits, whims about 'entering with the right foot,' and 'touching every post as he walked along;' and all the other mad chaotic lumber of a brain that, with sun-clear intellect, hovered forever on the verge of insanity,—must that same inmost essence have looked forth; unrecognisable to all but the most observant! Accordingly it was not recognised; Johnson passed not for a fine nature, but for a dull, almost brutal one. Might not, for example, the first-fruit of such a Lovingness, coupled with his quick Insight, have been expected to be a peculiarly courteous demeanour as man among men? In Johnson's 'Politeness,' which he often, to the wonder of some, asserted to be great, there was indeed somewhat that needed explanation. Nevertheless, if he insisted always on handing lady-visitors to their carriage; though with the certainty of collecting a mob of gazers in Fleet Street,—as might well be, the beau having on, by way of court dress, 'his rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes for slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose:'—in all this we can see the spirit of true Politeness, only shining through a strange medium. Thus again, in his apartments, at one time, there were unfortunately no chairs. 'A gentleman who frequently visited him whilst writing his *Idlers*, constantly found him at his desk, sitting on one with three legs; and on rising from it, he remarked that Johnson never forgot its defect; but would either hold it in his hand, or place it with great composure against some support; taking no notice of its imperfection to his visitor,'—who meanwhile, we suppose, sat upon folios, or in the sartorial fashion. 'It was remarkable in Johnson,' continues Miss Reynolds (*Renny dear*), 'that no external circumstances ever prompted him to make any apology, or to seem even sensible of their existence. Whether this was the effect of philosophic pride, or of some partial notion of his respecting high-breeding, is doubtful.' That it was, for one thing, the effect of genuine Politeness, is nowise doubtful. Not of the Pharisical Brummellean Politeness, which would suffer crucifixion rather than ask twice for soup: but the noble universal Politeness of a man that knows the dignity of men, and feels his own; such as may be seen in the patriarchal bearing of an Indian Sachem; such as Johnson himself exhibited, when a sudden chance brought him into dialogue with his King. To us, with our view of the man, it nowise appears 'strange' that he should have boasted himself cunning in the laws of Politeness; nor 'stranger still,' habitually attentive to practise them.

More legibly is this influence of the Loving heart to be traced in his intellectual character. What, indeed, is the beginning of intellect, the first inducement to the exercise thereof, but attraction towards somewhat, *affection* for it? Thus too, who ever saw, or will see, any true talent, not to speak of genius, the foundation of which is not goodness, love? From Johnson's strength of Affection, we deduced many of his intellectual peculiarities; especially that threatening array of perversions, known under the name of 'Johnson's Prejudices.' Looking well into the root from which these sprang, we have long ceased to view them with hostility, can pardon and reverently pity them. Consider with what force early imbibed opinions must have clung to a soul of this Affection. Those evil-famed Prejudices of his, that Jacobitism, Church-of-Englandism, hatred of the Scotch, belief in Witches, and suchlike, what were they but the ordinary beliefs of well-doing, well-meaning provincial Englishmen in that day? First gathered by his Father's hearth; round the kind 'country fires' of native Staffordshire; they grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength: they were hallowed by fondest sacred recollections; to part with them was parting with his heart's blood. If the man who has no strength of Affection, strength of Belief, have no strength of Prejudice, let him thank Heaven for it, but to himself take small thanks.

Melancholy it was, indeed, that the noble Johnson could not

wrck himself loose from these adhesions; that he could only purify them, and wear them with some nobleness. Yet let us understand how they grew out from the very centre of his being: nay moreover, how they came to cohere in him with what formed the business and worth of his Life, the sum of his whole Spiritual Endeavour. For it is on the same ground that he became throughout an Edifier and Repairer, not, as the others of his make were, a Puller-down; that in an age of universal Scepticism, England was still to produce its Believer. Mark too his candour even here; while a Dr. Adams, with placid surprise, asks: 'Have we not evidence enough of the soul's immortality?' Johnson answers: 'I wish for more.'

But the truth is, in Prejudice, as in all things, Johnson was the product of England; one of those *good* yeomen whose limbs were made in England: alas, the last of *such* Invincibles, their day being now done! His culture is wholly English; that not of a Thinker but of a 'Scholar': his interests are wholly English; he sees and knows nothing but England; he is the John Bull of Spiritual Europe: let him live, love him, as he was and could not but be! Pitiably it is, no doubt, that a Samuel Johnson must confute Hume's irreligious Philosophy of some 'story from a Clergyman of the Bishoprick of Durham;' should see nothing in the great Frederick but 'Voltaire's lackey;' in Voltaire himself but a man *acerrimi ingenii, paucarum literarum*; in Rousseau but one worthy to be hanged; and in the universal, long-prepared, inevitable Tendency of European Thought but a green-sick milkmaid's crotchet of, for variety's sake, 'milking the Bull.' Our good, dear John! Observe too what it is that he sees in the city of Paris: no feeblest glimpse of those D'Alemberts and Diderots, or of the strange questionable work they did; solely some Benedictine Priests, to talk kitchen-latin with them about *Editiones Principes*. '*Monshcer Nongtongpaw!*'—Our dear, foolish John: yet is there a lion's heart within him!—Pitiably all these things were, we say; yet nowise inexcusable; nay, as basis or as foil to much else that was in Johnson, almost venerable. Ought we not, indeed, to honour England, and English Institutions and Way of Life, that they could still equip such a man; could furnish him in heart and head to be a Samuel Johnson, and yet to love them, and unyieldingly fight for them? What truth and living vigour must such Institutions once have had, when, in the middle of the Eighteenth Century, there was still enough left in them for this!

It is worthy of note that, in our little British Isle, the two grand Antagonisms of Europe should have stood embodied, under their very highest concentration, in two men produced simultaneously among ourselves. Samuel Johnson and David Hume, as was observed, were children nearly of the same year: through life they were spectators of the same Life-movement; often inhabitants of the same city. Greater contrast, in all things, between two great men, could not be. Hume, well-born, competently provided for, whole in body and mind, of his own determination forces a way into Literature: Johnson, poor, moonstruck, diseased, forlorn, is forced into it 'with the bayonet of necessity at his back.'

And what a part did they severally play there! As Johnson became the father of all succeeding Tories; so was Hume the father of all succeeding Whigs, for his own Jacobitism was but an accident, as worthy to be named Prejudice as any of Johnson's. Again, if Johnson's culture was exclusively English, Hume's, in Scotland, became European;—for which reason too we find his influence spread deeply over all quarters of Europe, traceable deeply in all speculation, French, German, as well as domestic; while Johnson's name, out of England, is hardly anywhere to be met with. In spiritual stature they are almost equal; both great, among the greatest: yet how unlike in likeness! Hume has the widest, methodising, comprehensive eye; Johnson the keenest for perspicacity and minute detail: so had, perhaps chiefly, their education ordered it. Neither of the two rose into Poetry; yet both to some approximation thereof: Hume to something of an Epic clearness and method, as in his delineation of the Commonwealth Wars; Johnson to many a deep Lyric tone of plaintiveness and impetuous graceful power, scattered over his fugitive compositions. Both, rather to the general surprise, had a certain rugged Humour shining through their earnestness: the indication, indeed, that they *were* earnest men, and had *subdued* their wild world into a kind of temporary home and safe dwelling. Both were, by principle and habit, Stoics: yet Johnson with the greater merit, for he alone had very much to triumph over; farther, he alone ennobled his Stoicism into Devotion. To Johnson Life was as a Prison, to be endured with heroic faith: to Hume it was little more than a foolish Bartholomew-Fair Show-booth, with the foolish crowdings and elbowing of which it was not worth while to quarrel; the whole would break up, and be at liberty, so soon. Both realised the highest task of Manhood, that of living like men; each died not unfitly, in his way; Hume as one, with factitious, half-false gaiety, taking leave of what was itself wholly but a Lie: Johnson as one, with awe-struck, yet resolute and piously expectant heart, taking leave of a Reality, to enter a Reality still higher. Johnson had the harder problem of it, from first to last: whether, with some hesitation, we can admit that he was intrinsically the better-gifted, may remain undecided.

These two men now rest; the one in Westminster Abbey here; the other in the Calton-Hill Churchyard of Edinburgh. Through Life they did not meet: as contrasts, 'like in unlike,' love each other; so might they two have loved, and communed kindly,—had not the terrestrial dross and darkness that was in them withstood! One day, their spirits, what Truth was in each, will be found working, living in harmony and free union, even here below. They were the two half-men of their time: whose should combine the intrepid Candour and decisive scientific Clearness of Hume, with the Reverence, the Love, and devout Humility of Johnson, were the whole man of a new time. Till such whole man arrive for us, and the distracted time admit of such, might the Heavens but bless poor England with half-men worthy to tie the shoe-latchets of these, resembling these even from afar! Be both attentively regarded, let the true Effort of both prosper;—and for the present, both take our affectionate farewell!

SIR WALTER SCOTT.* [1838.]

AMERICAN Cooper asserts, in one of his books, that there is 'an instinctive tendency in men to look at any man who has become distinguished.' True, surely: as all observation and survey of mankind, from China to Peru, from Nebuchadnezzar to Old Hickory, will testify! Why do men crowd towards the improved-drop at Newgate, eager to catch a sight? The man about to be hanged is in a distinguished situation. Men crowd to such extent, that Greenacre's is not the only life choked-out there. Again, ask of these leathern vehicles, cabriolets, neat flies, with blue men and women in them, that scour all thoroughfares, Whither so fast? To see dear Mrs. Rigmarole, the distinguished female; great Mr. Rigmarole, the distinguished male! Or, consider that crowning phenomenon, and summary of modern civilisation, a *soirée* of lions. Glittering are the rooms, well-lighted, thronged; bright flows their undulatory flood of blonde-gowns and dress-coats, a soft smile dwelling on all faces; for behold there also flow the lions, hovering distinguished: oracles of the age, of one sort or another. Oracles really pleasant to see; whom it is worth while to go and see: look at them, but inquire not of them, depart rather and be thankful. For your lion-*soirée* admits not of speech; there lies the specialty of it. A meeting together of human creatures; and yet (so high has civilisation gone) the primary aim of human meeting, that soul might in some articulate utterance unfold itself to soul, can be dispensed with in it. Utterance there is not; nay there is a certain grinning play of tongue-fence, and make-believe of utterance, considerably worse than none. For which reason it has been suggested, with an eye to sincerity and silence in such lion-*soirées*, Might not each lion be, for example, ticketed, as wine-decanter are? Let him carry, slung round him, in such ornamental manner as seemed good, his silver label with name engraved; you lift his label, and read it, with what farther ocular survey you find useful, and speech is not needed at all. O Fenimore Cooper, it is most true there is 'an instinctive tendency in men to look at any man that has become distinguished;' and, moreover, an instinctive desire in men to become distinguished and be looked at!

For the rest, we will call it a most valuable tendency this; indispensable to mankind. Without it, where were star-and-garter, and significance of rank; where were all ambition, money-getting, respectability of gig or no gig; and, in a word, the main impetus by which society moves, the main force by which it hangs together? A tendency, we say, of manifold results; of manifold origin, not ridiculous only, but sublime;—which some incline to deduce from the mere gregarious purblind nature of man, prompting him to run, 'as dim-eyed animals do, towards any glittering object, were it but a scoured tankard, and mistake it for a solar luminary,' or even 'sheep-like, to run and crowd because many *have* already run'! It is indeed curious to consider how men do make the gods that themselves worship. For the most famed man, round whom all the world rapturously huzzahs and venerates, as if his like were not, is the same man whom all the world was wont to jostle into the kennels; not a changed man, but in every fibre of him the same man. Foolish world, what went ye out to see? A tankard scoured bright: and do there not lie, of the self-same pewter, whole barrowfuls of tankards, though by worse fortune all still in the dim state?

And yet, at bottom, it is not merely our gregarious sheep-like quality, but something better, and indeed best; what has been called 'the perpetual fact of hero-worship;' our inborn sincere love of great men! Not the gilt farthing, for its own sake, do even fools covet; but the gold guinea which they mistake it for. Veneration of great men is perennial in the nature of man; this, in all times, especially in these, is one of the blessedest facts

predicable of him. In all times, even in these seemingly so disobedient times, 'it remains a blessed fact, so cunningly has Nature ordered it, *that whatsoever man ought to obey, he cannot but obey*. Show the dullest clodpole, show the haughtiest feather-head, that a soul higher than himself is actually here; were his knees stiffened into brass, he must down and worship.' So it has been written; and may be cited and repeated till known to all. Understand it well, this of 'hero-worship' was the primary creed, and has intrinsically been the secondary and ternary, and will be the ultimate and final creed of mankind; indestructible, changing in shape, but in essence unchangeable; whereon politics, religions, loyalties, and all highest human interests have been and can be built, as on a rock that will endure while man endures. Such is hero-worship; so much lies in that our inborn sincere love of great men!—In favour of which unspeakable benefits of the reality, what can we do but cheerfully pardon the multiplex ineptitudes of the semblance; cheerfully wish even lion-*soirées*, with labels for their lions or without that improvement, all manner of prosperity? Let hero-worship flourish, say we; and the more and more assiduous chase after gilt farthings while guineas are not yet forthcoming. Herein, at lowest, is proof that guineas exist, that they are believed to exist, and valued. Find great men if you can; if you cannot, still quit not the search; in defect of great men, let there be noted men, in such number, to such degree of intensity as the public appetite can tolerate.

Whether Sir Walter Scott was a great man, is still a question with some; but there can be no question with any one that he was a most noted and even notable man. In this generation there was no literary man with such a popularity in any country; there have only been a few with such, taking in all generations and all countries. Nay, it is farther to be admitted that Sir Walter Scott's popularity was of a select sort rather; not a popularity of the populace. His admirers were at one time almost all the intelligent of civilised countries; and to the last included, and do still include, a great portion of that sort. Such fortune he had, and has continued to maintain for a space of some twenty or thirty years. So long the observed of all observers; a great man, or only a considerable man; here surely, if ever, is a singularly circumstanced, is a 'distinguished' man! In regard to whom, therefore, the 'instinctive tendency' on other men's part cannot be wanting. Let men look, where the world has already so long looked. And now, while the new, earnestly expected *Life* 'by his son-in-law and literary executor' again summons the whole world's attention round him, probably for the last time it will ever be so summoned; and men are in some sort taking leave of a notability, and about to go their way, and commit him to his fortune on the flood of things,—why should not this Periodical Publication likewise publish its thought about him? Readers of miscellaneous aspect, of unknown quantity and quality, are waiting to hear it done. With small inward vocation, but cheerfully obedient to destiny and necessity, the present reviewer will follow a multitude: to do evil or to do no evil, will depend not on the multitude but on himself. One thing he did decidedly wish; at least to wait till the *Work* were finished: for the Six promised Volumes, as the world knows, have flowed over into a Seventh, which will not for some weeks yet see the light. But the editorial powers, wearied with waiting, have become peremptory; and declare that, finished or not finished, they will have their hands washed of it at this opening of the year. Perhaps it is best. The physiognomy of Scott will not be much altered for us by that Seventh Volume; the prior Six have altered it but little;—as, indeed, a man who has written some two-hundred volumes of his own, and lived for thirty years amid the universal speech of friends, must have already left some likeness of himself. Be it as the peremptory editorial powers require.

* LONDON AND WESTMINSTER REVIEW, No. 12.—*Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Baronet*. Vols. i.-vi. Edinburgh, 1837.

First, therefore, a word on the *Life* itself. Mr. Lockhart's known powers justify strict requisition in his case. Our verdict in general would be, that he has accomplished the work he schemed for himself in a creditable workmanlike manner. It is true, his notion of what the work was, does not seem to have been very elevated. To picture forth the life of Scott according to any rules of art or composition, so that a reader, on adequately examining it, might say to himself, 'There is Scott, there is the physiognomy and meaning of Scott's appearance and transit on this earth; such was he by nature, so did the world act on him, so he on the world, with such result and significance for himself and us:' this was by no manner of means Mr. Lockhart's plan. A plan which, it is rashly said, should preside over every biography! It might have been fulfilled with all degrees of perfection, from that of the *Odyssey* down to *Thomas Ellwood* or lower. For there is no heroic poem in the world but is at bottom a biography, the life of a man: also, it may be said, there is no life of a man, faithfully recorded, but is a heroic poem of its sort, rhymed or unrhymed. It is a plan one would prefer, did it otherwise suit; which it does not, in these days. Seven volumes sell so much dearer than one; are so much easier to write than one. The *Odyssey*, for instance, what were the value of the *Odyssey* sold per sheet? One paper of *Pickwick*; or say, the inconsiderable fraction of one. This, in commercial algebra, were the equation: *Odyssey* equal to *Pickwick* divided by an unknown integer.

There is a great discovery still to be made in Literature, that of paying literary men by the quantity they *do not* write. Nay, in sober truth, is not this actually the rule in all writing; and, moreover, in all conduct and acting? Not what stands above-ground, but what lies unseen *under* it, as the root and subterrene element it sprang from and emblemated forth, determines the value. Under all speech that is good for anything there lies a silence that is better. Silence is deep as Eternity: speech is shallow as Time. Paradoxical does it seem? Woe for the age, woe for the man, quack-ridden, bespoeched, bespouted, blown about like barren Sahara, to whom this world-old truth were altogether strange!—Such we say is the rule, acted on or not, recognised or not; and he who departs from it, what can he do but spread himself into breadth and length, into superficiality and saleability; and, except as filigree, become comparatively useless? One thinks, Had but the hogshead of thin wash, which sours in a week ready for the kennels, been *distilled*, been concentrated! Our dear Fenimore Cooper, whom we started with, might, in that way, have given us one *Natty Leatherstocking*, one melodious synopsis of Man and Nature in the West (for it lay in him to do it), almost as a Saint-Pierre did for the Islands of the East; and the hundred Incoherences, cobbled hastily together by order of Colburn and Company, had slumbered in Chaos, as all incoherences ought if possible to do. Verily this same genius of diffuse-writing, of diffuse-acting, is a Moloch; and souls pass through the fire to him, more than enough. Surely, if ever discovery was valuable and needful, it were that above indicated, of paying by the work *not* visibly done!—Which needful discovery we will give the whole projecting, railwaying, knowledge-diffusing, march-of-intellect and otherwise promotive and locomotive societies in the Old and New World, any required length of centuries to make. Once made, such discovery once made, we too will fling cap into the air, and shout '*Io Pæan!* the Devil is conquered;'—and, in the *mean* while, study to think it nothing miraculous that seven biographical volumes are given where one had been better; and that several other things happen, very much as they from of old were known to do, and are like to continue doing.

Mr. Lockhart's aim, we take it, was not that of producing any such highflown work of art as we hint at: or indeed to do much other than to print, intelligibly bound together by order of time, and by some requisite intercalary exposition, all such letters, documents and notices about Scott as he found lying suitable, and as it seemed likely the world would undertake to read. His Work, accordingly, is not so much a composition, as what we may call a compilation well done. Neither is this a task of no difficulty; this too is a task that may be performed with extremely various degrees of talent: from the *Life and Correspondence of Hannah More*, for instance, up to this *Life of Scott*, there is a wide range indeed! Let us take the Seven Volumes,

and be thankful that they are genuine in their kind. Nay, as to that of their being seven and not one, it is right to say that the public so required it. To have done other, would have shown little policy in an author. Had Mr. Lockhart laboriously compressed himself, and instead of well-done compilation, brought out the well-done composition, in one volume instead of seven, which not many men in England are better qualified to do, there can be no doubt that his readers for the time had been immeasurably fewer. If the praise of magnanimity be denied him, that of prudence must be conceded, which perhaps he values more.

The truth is, the work, done in this manner too, was good to have: Scott's Biography, if uncomposed, lies printed and indestructible here, in the elementary state, and can at any time be composed, if necessary, by whosoever has a call to that. As it is, as it was meant to be, we repeat, the work is vigorously done. Sagacity, decision, candour, diligence, good manners, good sense: these qualities are throughout observable. The dates, calculations, statements, we suppose to be all accurate; much laborious inquiry, some of it impossible for another man, has been gone into, the results of which are imparted with due brevity. Scott's letters, not interesting generally, yet never absolutely without interest, are copiously given; copiously, but with selection; the answers to them still more select. Narrative, delineation, and at length personal reminiscences, occasionally of much merit, of a certain rough force, sincerity and picturesqueness, duly intervene. The scattered members of Scott's Life do lie here, and could be disentangled. In a word, this compilation is the work of a manful, clear-seeing, conclusive man, and has been executed with the faculty and combination of faculties the public had a right to expect from the name attached to it.

One thing we hear greatly blamed in Mr. Lockhart: that he has been too communicative, indiscreet, and has recorded much that ought to have lain suppressed. Persons are mentioned, and circumstances, not always of an ornamental sort. It would appear there is far less reticence than was looked for! Various persons, name and surname, have 'received pain:' nay the very Hero of the Biography is rendered unheroic; unornamental facts of him, and of those he had to do with, being set forth in plain English: hence 'personality,' 'indiscretion,' or worse, 'sanctities of private life,' etc. etc. How delicate, decent is English Biography, bless its mealy mouth! A Damocles' sword of *Respectability* hangs forever over the poor English Life-writer (as it does over poor English Life in general), and reduces him to the verge of paralysis. Thus it has been said, 'there are no English lives worth reading except those of Players, who by the nature of the case have bidden *Respectability* good-day.' The English biographer has long felt that if in writing his Man's Biography, he wrote down anything that could by possibility offend any man, he had written wrong. The plain consequence was, that, properly speaking, no biography whatever could be produced. The poor biographer, having the fear *not* of God before his eyes, was obliged to retire as it were into vacuum: and write in the most melancholy, straitened manner, with only vacuum for a result. Vain that he wrote, and that we kept reading volume on volume: there was no biography, but some vague ghost of a biography, white, stainless; without feature or substance; *vacuum*, as we say, and wind and shadow,—which indeed the material of it was.

No man lives without jostling and being jostled; in all ways he has to *elbow* himself through the world, giving and receiving offence. His life is a battle, in so far as it is an entity at all. The very oyster, we suppose, comes in collision with oysters: undoubtedly enough it does come in collision with Necessity and Difficulty; and helps itself through, not as a perfect ideal oyster, but as an imperfect real one. Some kind of remorse must be known to the oyster; certain hatreds, certain pusillanimities. But as for man, his conflict is continual with the spirit of contradiction, that is without and within; with the evil spirit (or call it, with the weak, most necessitous, pitiable spirit), that is in others and in himself. His walk, like all walking (say the mechanics), is a series of *falls*. To paint man's life is to represent these things. Let them be represented, fitly, with dignity and measure; but above all, let them be represented. No tragedy of *Hamlet* with the part of Hamlet omitted by particular desire! No ghost of a biography, let the Damocles' sword of *Respectability* (which, after all, is but a pasteboard one) threaten

One hopes that the public taste is much mended in this matter; that voluminous biographies, with a good many other productions related to them, are withdrawn or withdrawing into obscurity. Probably it was Mr. Lockhart's feeling of what the public would approve, that led him, open-eyed, into this course against the small criticising public: we joyfully accept the man.

Perhaps then, of all the praises copiously bestowed on his *Life*, there is none in reality so creditable to him as this same censure, which has also been pretty copious. It is a censure rather than a good many praises. He is found guilty of having said this and that, calculated not to be entirely pleasant to this man and that; in other words, calculated to give him and the thing he worked in a living set of features, not leave him vague, in the white bearded-ghost condition. Several men, as we hear, cry out: 'See, there is something written not entirely pleasant to me.' Good friend, it is pity; but who can help it? They that will expect about bonfires may, sometimes very fairly, get their heads singed; it is the price they pay for such illumination; natural sunlight is safe and free to all. For our part, we hope all manner of biographies that are written in England will henceforth be written so. If it is fit that they be written otherwise, then it is still better that they be not written at all: to produce not things but ghosts of things can never be the duty of man.

The biographer has this problem set before him: to delineate a likeness of the earthly pilgrimage of a man. He will compute well what profit is in it, and what disprofit; under which latter head this of offending any of his fellow-creatures will surely not be forgotten. Nay, this may so swell the disprofit side of his account, that many an enterprise of biography, otherwise promising, shall require to be renounced. But once taken up, the rule before all rules is to do it, not to do the ghost of it. In speaking of the man and men he has to deal with, he will of course keep all his charities about him; but all his eyes open. Far be it from him to set down aught untrue; nay, not to abstain from, and leave in oblivion, much that is true. But having found a thing or things essential for his subject, and well computed the for and against, he will in very deed set down such thing or things, nothing doubting,—having, we may say, the fear of God before his eyes, and no other fear whatever. Censure the biographer's prudences; dissent from the computation he made, or agree with it; be all malice of his, be all falsehood, may be all offensive avoidable inaccuracy, condemned and consumed; but know that by this plan only, executed as was possible, could the biographer hope to make a biography: and blame him not that he did what it had been the worst fault not to do.

As to the accuracy or error of these statements about the Ballantynes and other persons aggrieved, which are questions much mooted at present in some places, we know nothing at all. If they are inaccurate, let them be corrected; if the inaccuracy was avoidable, let the author bear rebuke and punishment for it. We can only say, these things carry no look of inaccuracy on the face of them: neither is anywhere the smallest trace of ill-will or unjust feeling discernible. Decidedly the probabilities are, and till better evidence arise, the fair conclusion is, that this matter stands very much as it ought to do. Let the clatter of censure, therefore, propagate itself as far as it can. For Mr. Lockhart it virtually amounts to this very considerable praise, that, standing full in the face of the public, he has set at naught, and been among the first to do it, a public piece of cant; one of the commonest we have, and closely allied to many others of the fellest sort, as smooth as it looks.

The other censure, of Scott being made unheroic, springs from the same stem; and is, perhaps, a still more wonderful flower of it. Your true hero must have no features, but be white, stainless, an impersonal ghost-hero! But connected with this, there is a hypothesis now current, due probably to some man of name, for its own force would not carry it far: That Mr. Lockhart at heart has a dislike to Scott, and has done his best in an under-hand treacherous manner to dishonour him! Such hypothesis is actually current: he that has ears may hear it now and then. On which astonishing hypothesis, if a word must be said, it can only be an apology for silence. 'That there are things at which one stands struck silent, as at first sight of the Infinite.' For if Mr. Lockhart is fairly chargeable with any radical defect, if on

any side his insight entirely fails him, it seems even to be in this, that Scott is altogether lovely to him; that Scott's greatness spreads out for him on all hands beyond reach of eye; that his very faults become beautiful, his vulgar worldliness are solid prudences, proprieties; and of his worth there is no measure. Does not the poet-biographer dwell on his *Abbots*, *Pirates*, and hasty theatrical scene-paintings; affectionately analysing them, as if they were Raphael-pictures, time-defying *Hamlets*, *Othellos*? The Novel-manufacture, with its £15,000 a-year, is sacred to him as creation of a genius, which carries the noble victor up to Heaven. Scott is to Lockhart the unparalleled of the time; an object spreading-out before him like a sea without shore. Of that astonishing hypothesis, let expressive silence be the only answer.

And so in sum, with regard to *Lockhart's Life of Scott*, readers that believe in us shall read it with the feeling that a man of talent, decision, and insight wrote it; wrote it in seven volumes, not in one, because the public would pay for it better in that state; but wrote it with courage, with frankness, sincerity; on the whole, in a very readable, recommendable manner, as things go. Whosoever needs it can purchase it, or purchase the loan of it, with assurance more than usual that he has ware for his money. And now enough of the written *Life*; we will glance a little at the man and his acted life.

Into the question whether Scott was a great man or not, we do not propose to enter deeply. It is, as too usual, a question about words. There can be no doubt but many men have been named and printed *great* who were vastly smaller than he: as little doubt moreover that of the specially *good*, a very large portion, according to any genuine standard of man's worth, were worthless in comparison to him. He for whom Scott is great may most innocently name him so; may with advantage admire his great qualities, and ought with sincere heart to emulate them. At the same time, it is good that there be a certain degree of precision in our epithets. It is good to understand, for one thing, that no popularity, and open-mouthed wonder of all the world, continued even for a long series of years, can make a man great. Such popularity is a remarkable fortune; indicates a great adaptation of the man to his element of circumstances; but may or may not indicate anything great in the man. To our imagination, as above hinted, there is a certain apotheosis in it; but in the reality no apotheosis at all. Popularity is as a blaze of illumination, or alas, of conflagration, kindled round a man; showing what is in him; not putting the smallest item more into him; often abstracting much from him; conflagrating the poor man himself into ashes and *caput mortuum*! And then, by the nature of it, such popularity is transient; your 'series of years,' quite unexpectedly, sometimes almost all on a sudden, terminates! For the stupidity of men, especially of men congregated in masses round any object, is extreme. What illuminations and conflagrations have kindled themselves, as if new heavenly suns had risen, which proved only to be tar-barrels and terrestrial locks of straw! Profane Princesses cried out, 'One God, one Farinelli!'—and whither now have they and Farinelli danced?

In Literature too there have been seen popularities greater even than Scott's, and nothing perennial in the interior of them. Lope de Vega, whom all the world swore by, and made a proverb of; who could make an acceptable five-act tragedy in almost as many hours; the greatest of all popularities past or present, and perhaps one of the greatest men that ever ranked among popularities: Lope himself, so radiant, far-shining, has not proved to be a sun or star of the firmament; but is as good as lost and gone out; or plays at best in the eyes of some few as a vague aurora-borealis, and brilliant ineffectuality. The great man of Spain sat obscure at the time, all dark and poor, a maimed soldier; writing his *Don Quixote* in prison. And Lope's fate withal was sad, his popularity perhaps a curse to him; for in this man there was something ethereal too, a divine particle traceable in few other popular men; and such far-shining diffusion of himself, though all the world swore by it, would do nothing for the true life of him even while he lived; he had to creep into a convent, into a monk's cowl, and learn, with infinite sorrow, that his blessedness had lain elsewhere; that when a man's life feels

itself to be sick and an error, no voting of bystanders can make it well and a truth again.

Or coming down to our own times, was not August Kotzebue popular? Kotzebue, not so many years since, saw himself, if rumour and hand-clapping could be credited, the greatest man going; saw visibly his Thoughts, dressed-out in plush and paste-board, permeating and perambulating civilised Europe; the most iron visages weeping with him, in all theatres from Cadiz to Kamtchatka; his own 'astonishing genius' meanwhile producing two tragedies or so per month: he, on the whole, blazed high enough: he too has gone out into Night and *Orcus*, and already is not. We will omit this of popularity altogether; and account it as making simply nothing towards Scott's greatness or non-greatness, as an accident, not a quality.

Shorn of this falsifying *nimbus*, and reduced to his own natural dimensions, there remains the reality, Walter Scott, and what we can find in him: to be accounted great, or not great, according to the dialects of men. Friends to precision of epithet will probably deny his title to the name 'great.' It seems to us there goes other stuff to the making of great men than can be detected here. One knows not what idea worthy of the name of great, what purpose, instinct or tendency, that could be called great, Scott ever was inspired with. His life was worldly; his ambitions were worldly. There is nothing spiritual in him; all is economical, material, of the earth earthy. A love of picturesque, of beautiful, vigorous and graceful things; a genuine love, yet not more genuine than has dwelt in hundreds of men named minor poets: this is the highest quality to be discerned in him.

His power of representing these things, too, his poetic power, like his moral power, was a genius *in extenso*, as we may say, not *in inteso*. In action, in speculation, *broad* as he was, he rose nowhere high; productive without measure as to quantity, in quality he for the most part transcended but a little way the region of commonplace. It has been said, 'no man has written as many volumes with so few sentences that can be quoted.' Winged words were not his vocation; nothing urged him that way: the great Mystery of Existence was not great to him; did not drive him into rocky solitudes to wrestle with it for an answer, to be answered or to perish. He had nothing of the martyr; into no 'dark region to slay monsters for us,' did he, either led or driven, venture down: his conquests were for his own behoof mainly, conquests over common market-labour, and reckonable in good metallic coin of the realm. The thing he had faith in, except power, power of what sort soever, and even of the rudest sort, would be difficult to point out. One sees not that he believed in anything; nay he did not even disbelieve; but quietly acquiesced, and made himself at home in a world of conventionalities; the false, the semi-false and the true were alike true in this, that they were there, and had power in their hands more or less. It was well to feel so; and yet not well! We find it written, 'Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!' but surely it is a double woe to them that are at ease in Babel, in Domdaniel. On the other hand, he wrote many volumes, amusing many thousands of men. Shall we call this great? It seems to us there dwells and struggles another sort of spirit in the inward parts of great men!

Brother Ringleub, the missionary, inquired of Ram-Dass, a Hindoo man-god, who had set up for godhood lately, What he meant to do, then, with the sins of mankind? To which Ram-Dass at once answered, He had *fire enough in his belly* to burn-up all the sins in the world. Ram-Dass was right so far, and had a spice of sense in him; for surely it is the test of every divine man this same, and without it he is not divine or great,—that he *have fire* in him to burn-up somewhat of the sins of the world, of the miseries and errors of the world: why else is he there? Far be it from us to say that a great man must needs, with benevolence prepenne, become a 'friend of humanity;' nay that such professional self-conscious friends of humanity are not the fatalest kind of persons to be met with in our day. All greatness is unconscious, or it is little and nought. And yet a great man without *such fire* in him, burning dim or developed, as a divine behest in his heart of hearts, never resting till it be fulfilled, were a solecism in Nature. A great man is ever, as the Transcendentalists speak, possessed with an *idea*.

Napoleon himself, not the superfinest of great men, and

ballasted sufficiently with prudences and egoisms, had nevertheless, as is clear enough, an idea to start with: the idea that Democracy was the Cause of Man, the right and infinite Cause. Accordingly he made himself 'the armed Soldier of Democracy:' and did vindicate it in a rather great manner. Nay, to the very last, he had a kind of idea; that, namely, of '*La carrière ouverte aux talens*, The tools to him that can handle them;' really one of the best ideas yet promulgated on that matter, or rather the one true central idea, towards which all the others, if they tend anywhither, must tend. Unhappily it was in the military province only that Napoleon could realise this idea of his, being forced to fight for himself the while: before he got it tried to any extent in the civil province of things, his head by much victory grew light (no head can stand more than its quantity); and he lost head, as they say, and became a selfish ambitionist and quack, and was hurled out; leaving his idea to be realised, in the civil province of things, by others. Thus was Napoleon; thus are all great men: children of the idea; or, in Ram-Dass's phraseology, furnished with fire to burn up the miseries of men. Conscious or unconscious, latent or unfolded, there is small vestige of any such fire being extant in the inner-man of Scott.

Yet on the other hand, the surliest critic must allow that Scott was a genuine man, which itself is a great matter. No affectation, fantasticality, or distortion dwelt in him; no shadow of cant. Nay withal, was he not a right brave and strong man, according to his kind? What a load of toil, what a measure of felicity, he quietly bore along with him; with what quiet strength he both worked on this earth, and enjoyed in it; invincible to evil fortune and to good! A most composed invincible man; in difficulty and distress knowing no discouragement, Samson-like carrying off on his strong Samson-shoulders the gates that would imprison him; in danger and menace laughing at the whisper of fear. And then with such a sunny current of true humour and humanity, a free joyful sympathy with so many things; what of fire he had all lying so beautifully *latent*, as radical latent heat, as fruitful internal warmth of life; a most robust, healthy man! The truth is, our best definition of Scott were perhaps even this, that he was, if no great man, then something much pleasanter to be, a robust, thoroughly healthy, and withal very prosperous and victorious man. An eminently well-conditioned man, healthy in body, healthy in soul; we will call him one of the *healthiest* of men.

Neither is this a small matter: health is a great matter, both to the possessor of it and to others. On the whole, that humorist in the Moral Essay was not so far out, who determined on honouring health only; and so instead of humbling himself to the high-born, to the rich and well-dressed, insisted on doffing hat to the healthy: coroneted carriages with pale faces in them passed by as failures, miserable and lamentable; trucks with ruddy-cheeked strength dragging at them were greeted as successful and venerable. For does not health mean harmony, the synonym of all that is true, justly-ordered, good; is it not, in some sense, the net total, as shown by experiment, of whatever worth is in us? The healthy man is the most meritorious product of Nature so far as he goes. A healthy body is good; but a soul in right health,—it is the thing beyond all others to be prayed for; the blessedest thing this earth receives of Heaven. Without artificial medicament of philosophy, or tight-lacing of creeds (always very questionable), the healthy soul discerns what is good, and adheres to it, and retains it; discerns what is bad, and spontaneously casts it off. An instinct from Nature herself, like that which guides the wild animals of the forest to their food, shows him what he shall do, what he shall abstain from. The false and foreign will not adhere to him; cant and all fantastic diseased incrustations are impossible;—as Walker the *Original*, in such eminence of health was *he* for his part, *could* not, by much abstinence from soap-and-water, attain to a dirty face! This thing thou canst work with and profit by, this thing is substantial and worthy; that other thing thou canst not work with, it is trivial and inapt: so speaks unerringly the inward monition of the man's whole nature. No need of logic to prove the most argumentative absurdity absurd; as Goethe says of himself, 'all this ran down from me like water from a man in wax-cloth dress.' Blessed is the healthy nature; it is the coherent,

sweetly co-operative, not incoherent, self-distracting, self-destructive one. In the harmonious adjustment and play of all the faculties, the just balance of oneself gives a just feeling towards all men and all things. Glad light from within radiates outwards, and enlightens and embellishes.

Now all this can be predicated of Walter Scott, and of no British literary man that we remember in these days, to any such extent,—if it be not perhaps of one, the most opposite imaginable to Scott, but his equal in this quality and what holds of it: William Cobbett! Nay there are other similarities, widely different as they two look; nor be the comparison disparaging to Scott: for Cobbett also, as the pattern John Bull of his century, strong as the rhinoceros, and with singular humanities and genialities shining through his thick skin, is a most brave phenomenon. So bounteous was Nature to us; in the sickliest of recorded ages, when British Literature lay all puking and sprawling in Werterism, Byronism, and other Sentimentalism tearful or spasmodic (fruit of internal wind), Nature was kind enough to send us two healthy Men, of whom she might still say, not without pride: "These also were made in England; such limbs do I still make there!" It is one of the cheerfulest sights, let the question of its greatness be settled as you will. A healthy nature may or may not be great; but there is no great nature that is not healthy.

Or, on the whole, might we not say, Scott, in the new vesture of the nineteenth century, was intrinsically very much the old fighting Borderer of prior centuries; the kind of man Nature did of old make in that birthland of his? In the saddle, with the foray-spear, he would have acquitted himself as he did at the desk with his pen. One fancies how, in stout *Beardie* of Harden's time, he could have played *Beardie's* part; and been the stalwart buff-belted *terro filius* he in this late time could only delight to draw. The same stout self-help was in him; the same oak and triple brass round his heart. He too could have fought at Redswire, cracking crowns with the fiercest, if that had been the task; could have harried cattle in Tynedale, repaying injury with compound interest; a right sufficient captain of men. A man without qualms or fantasticalities; a hard-headed, sound-hearted man, of joyous robust temper, looking to the main chance, and fighting direct thitherward; *valide stultus homo!*—How much in that case had slumbered in him, and passed away without sign! But indeed who knows how much slumbers in many men? Perhaps our greatest poets are the mute Miltons; the vocals are those whom by happy accident we lay hold of, one here, one there, as it chances, and make vocal. It is even a question, whether, had not want, discomfort, and distress warrants been busy at Stratford-on-Avon, Shakespeare himself had not lived killing calves or combing wool! Had the Edial Boarding-school turned out well, we had never heard of Samuel Johnson; Samuel Johnson had been a fat schoolmaster and dogmatic gerundgrinder, and never known that he was more. Nature is rich those two eggs thou art eating carelessly to breakfast, could they not have been hatched into a pair of fowls, and have covered the whole world with poultry?

But it was not harrying of cattle in Tynedale, or cracking of crowns at Redswire, that this stout Border-chief was appointed to perform. Far other work. To be the song-singer and pleasant tale teller to Britain and Europe, in the beginning of the artificial nineteenth century; here, and not there, lay his business. *Beardie* of Harden would have found it very amazing. How he shapes himself to this new element; how he helps himself along in it, makes it too do for him, lives sound and victorious in it, and lends over the marches such a spoil as all the cattle-droves the Hardens ever took were poor in comparison to; this is the history of the life and achievements of our Sir Walter Scott, Baronet;—whereat we are now to glance for a little! It is a thing remarkable; a thing substantial; of joyful, victorious sort; not unworthy to be glanced at. Withal, however, a glance here and there will suffice. Our limits are narrow; the thing, were it never so victorious, is not of the sublime sort, nor extremely edifying; there is nothing in it to censure vehemently, nor love vehemently; there is more to wonder at than admire; and the whole secret is not an abstruse one.

Till towards the age of thirty, Scott's life has nothing in it decisively pointing towards Literature, or indeed towards distinc-

tion of any kind; he is wedded, settled, and has gone through all his preliminary steps, without symptom of renown as yet. It is the life of every other Edinburgh youth of his station and time. Fortunate we must name it, in many ways. Parents in easy or wealthy circumstances, yet unencumbered with the cares and perversions of aristocracy; nothing eminent in place, in faculty, or culture, yet nothing deficient; all around is methodic regulation, prudence, prosperity, kind-heartedness; an element of warmth and light, of affection, industry, and burgherly comfort, heightened into elegance; in which the young heart can wholesomely grow. A vigorous health seems to have been given by Nature; yet, as if Nature had said withal: 'Let it be a health to express itself by mind, not by body,' a lameness is added in childhood; the brave little boy, instead of romping and bickering, must learn to think; or at lowest, what is a great matter, to sit still. No rackets and trundling-hoops for this young Walter; but ballads, history-books and a world of legendary stuff, which his mother and those near him are copiously able to furnish. Disease, which is but superficial, and issues in outward lameness, does not cloud the young existence; rather forwards it towards the expansion it is fitted for. The miserable disease had been one of the internal nobler parts, marring the general organisation; under which no Walter Scott could have been forwarded, or with all his other endowments could have been producible or possible. 'Nature gives healthy children much; how much! Wise education is a wise unfolding of this; often it unfolds itself better of its own accord.'

Add one other circumstance: the place where; namely, Presbyterian Scotland. The influences of this are felt incessantly, they stream-in at every pore. 'There is a country accent,' says La Rochefoucault, 'not in speech only, but in thought, conduct, character, and manner of existing, which never forsakes a man.' Scott, we believe, was all his days an Episcopalian Dissenter in Scotland; but that makes little to the matter. Nobody who knows Scotland and Scott can doubt but Presbyterianism too had a vast share in the forming of him. A country where the entire people is, or even once has been, laid hold of, filled to the heart with an infinite religious idea, has 'made a step from which it cannot retrograde.' Thought, conscience, the sense that man is denizen of a Universe, creature of an Eternity, has penetrated to the remotest cottage, to the simplest heart. Beautiful and awful, the feeling of a Heavenly Behest, of Duty god-commanded, overcanopies all life. There is an inspiration in such a people: one may say in a more special sense, 'the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.' Honour to all the brave and true; everlasting honour to brave old Knox, one of the truest of the true! That, in the moment while he and his cause, amid civil broils, in convulsion and confusion, were still but struggling for life, he sent the schoolmaster forth to all corners, and said: 'Let the people be taught:' this is but one, and indeed an inevitable and comparatively inconsiderable item in his great message to men. His message, in its true compass, was: 'Let men know that they are men; created by God, responsible to God; who work in any meanest moment of time what will last through eternity.' It is verily a great message. Not ploughing and hammering machines, not patent-digesters (never so ornamental) to digest the produce of these: no, in no wise; born slaves neither of their fellow-men, nor of their own appetites; but men! This great message Knox did deliver, with a man's voice and strength; and found a people to believe him.

Of such an achievement, we say, were it to be made once only, the results are immense. Thought, in such a country, may change its form, but cannot go out; the country has attained *majority*; thought, and a certain spiritual manhood, ready for all work that man can do, endures there. It may take many forms: the form of hard-fisted money-getting industry, as in the vulgar Scotchman, in the vulgar New Englander; but as compact developed force and alertness of faculty, it is still there; it may utter itself one day as the colossal Scepticism of a Hume (beneficent this too though painful, wrestling Titan-like through doubt and inquiry towards new belief); and again, some better day, it may utter itself as the inspired Melody of a Burns; in a word, it is there, and continues to manifest itself, in the Voice and the Work of a Nation of hardy endeavouring considering men, with whatever that may bear in it, or unfold from it. The Scotch national character originates in many circumstances; first of all, in the Saxon stuff there was to work on; but next, and beyond all else except that, in the

Presbyterian Gospel of John Knox. It seems a good national character; and on some sides not so good. Let Scott thank John Knox, for he owed him much, little as he dreamed of debt in that quarter! No Scotchman of his time was more entirely Scotch than Walter Scott: the good and the not so good, which all Scotchmen inherit, ran through every fibre of him.

Scott's childhood, school-days, college-days, are pleasant to read of, though they differ not from those of others in his place and time. The memory of him may probably enough last till this record of them becomes far more curious than it now is. 'So lived an Edinburgh Writer to the Signet's son in the end of the eighteenth century,' may some future Scotch novelist say to himself in the end of the twenty-first! The following little fragment of infancy is all we can extract. It is from an Autobiography which he had begun, which one cannot but regret he did not finish. Scott's best qualities never shone out more freely than when he went upon anecdote and reminiscence. Such a master of narrative and of himself could have done personal narrative well. Here, if anywhere, his knowledge was complete, and all his humour and good-humour had free scope.

'An odd incident is worth recording. It seems, my mother had sent a maid to take charge of me, at this farm of Sandy-Knowe, that I might be no inconvenience to the family. But the damsel sent on that important mission had left her heart behind her, in the keeping of some wild fellow, it is likely, who had done and said more to her than he was like to make good. She became extremely desirous to return to Edinburgh; and, as my mother made a point of her remaining where she was, she contracted a sort of hatred at poor me, as the cause of her being detained at Sandy-Knowe. This rose, I suppose, to a sort of delirious affection; for she confessed to old Alison Wilson, the housekeeper, that she had carried me up to the crags under a strong temptation of the Devil to cut my throat with her scissors, and bury me in the moss. Alison instantly took possession of my person, and took care that her confidant should not be subject to any further temptation, at least so far as I was concerned. She was dismissed of course, and I have heard afterwards became a lunatic.

'It is here, at Sandy-Knowe, in the residence of my paternal grandfather, already mentioned, that I have the first consciousness of existence; and I recollect distinctly that my situation and appearance were a little whimsical. Among the odd remedies recurred to, to aid my lameness, someone had recommended that so often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, I should be stripped, and swathed-up in the skin warm as it was flayed from the carcass of the animal. In this Tartar-like habit I well remember lying upon the floor of the little parlour in the farmhouse, while my grandfather, a venerable old man with white hair, used every incitement to make me try to crawl. I also distinctly remember the late Sir George M'Dougal of Mackerstown, father of the present Sir Henry Hay M'Dougal, joining in the attempt. He was, God knows how, a relation of ours; and I still recollect him, in his old-fashioned military habit (he had been Colonel of the Greys), with a small cocked-hat deeply laced, an embroidered scarlet waistcoat, and a light-coloured coat, with milk-white locks tied in a military fashion, kneeling on the ground before me, and dragging his watch along the carpet to induce me to follow it. The benevolent old soldier, and the infant wrapped in his sheepskin, would have afforded an odd group to uninterested spectators. This must have happened about my third year (1774), for Sir George M'Dougal and my grandfather both died shortly after that period.'

We will glance next into the '*Liddesdale Raids*.' Scott has grown up to be a brisk-hearted jovial young man and Advocate: in vacation-time he makes excursions to the Highlands, to the Border Cheviots, and Northumberland; rides free and far, on his stout galloway, through bog and brake, over the dim moory Debatable Land,—over Flodden and other fields and places, where, though he knew it not, his work lay. No land, however dim and moory, but either has had or will have its poet, and so become not unknown in song. Liddesdale, which was once as prosaic as most dales, having now attained illustration, let us glance thitherward: Liddesdale too is on this ancient Earth of ours, under this eternal Sky; and gives and takes, in the most incalculable manner, with the Universe at large! Scott's experiences there are rather of the rustic Arcadian sort; the element of whisky not wanting. We should premise that here and there a feature has, perhaps, been aggravated for effect's sake:

'During seven successive years,' writes Mr. Lockhart for the Autobiography has long since left us, 'Scott made a *raid*, as he called it, into Liddesdale with Mr. Shortreed, sheriff-substitute of Roxburgh, for his guide; exploring every rivulet to its source, and every ruined *peel* from foundation to battlement. At this time no wheeled carriage had ever

been seen in the district;—the first, indeed, was a gig, driven by Scott himself for a part of his way, when on the last of these seven excursions. There was no inn nor publichouse of any kind in the whole valley; the travellers passed from the shepherd's hut to the minister's manse, and again from the cheerful hospitality of the manse to the rough and jolly welcome of the homestead; gathering, wherever they went, songs and tunes, and occasionally more tangible relics of antiquity,—even such a "rowth of auld knicknackets" as Burns ascribes to Captain Grosse. To these rambles Scott owed much of the materials of his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*; and not less of that intimate acquaintance with the living manners of these unsophisticated regions, which constitutes the chief charm of one of the most charming of his prose works. But how soon he had any definite object before him in his researches seems very doubtful. "He was makin' himsell a' the time," said Mr. Shortreed; "but he didna ken maybe what he was about till years had passed: at first he thought o' little, I daresay, but the queerness and the fun."

"In those days," says the Memorandum before me, "advocates were not so plenty—at least about Liddesdale;" and the worthy Sheriff-substitute goes on to describe the sort of bustle, not unmixed with alarm, produced at the first farmhouse they visited (Willie Elliot's at Millburnholm), when the honest man was informed of the quality of one of his guests. When they dismounted, accordingly, he received Mr. Scott with great ceremony, and insisted upon himself leading his horse to the stable. Shortreed accompanied Willie, however; and the latter, after taking a deliberate peep at Scott, "out-by the edge of the door-cheek," whispered: "Weel, Robin, I say, de'il hae me if I's be a bit feared for him now; he's just a chield like ourselves, I think." Half-a-dozen dogs of all degrees had already gathered round "the advocate," and his way of returning their compliments had set Willie Elliot at once at his ease.

'According to Mr. Shortreed, this good man of Millburnholm was the great original of Dandie Dinmont. * * * They dined at Millburnholm; and, after having lingered over Willie Elliot's punch-bowl, until, in Mr. Shortreed's phrase, they were "half-glowrin'," mounted their steeds again, and proceeded to Dr. Elliot's at Cleugh-head, where ("for," says my Memorandum, "folk werena very nice in those days") the two travellers slept in one and the same bed,—as, indeed, seems to have been the case with them throughout most of their excursions in this primitive district. Dr. Elliot (a clergyman) had already a large Ms. collection of the ballads Scott was in quest of. * * * Next morning they seem to have ridden a long way for the express purpose of visiting one "auld Thomas o' Tuzzilehope," another Elliot, I suppose, who was celebrated for his skill on the Border pipe, and in particular for being in possession of the real lilt* of *Dick o' the Cowe*. Before starting, that is at six o'clock, the ballad-hunters had, "just to lay the stomach, a devilled duck or twae and some London porter." Auld Thomas found them, nevertheless, well disposed for "breakfast" on their arrival at Tuzzilehope; and this being over, he delighted them with one of the most hideous and unearthly of all specimens of "riding music," and, moreover, with considerable libations of whisky-punch, manufactured in a certain wooden vessel, resembling a very small milkpail, which he called "Wisdom," because it "made" only a few spoonfuls of spirits,—though he had the art of replenishing it so adroitly, that it had been celebrated for fifty years as more fatal to sobriety than any bowl in the parish. Having done due honour to "Wisdom," they again mounted, and proceeded over moss and moor to some other equally hospitable master of the pipe. "Ah me," says Shortreed, "sic an endless fund o' humour and drollery as he then had wi' him! Never ten yards but we were either laughing or roaring and singing. Wherever we stopped, how brawlie he suited himsell to everybody! He aye did as the lave did; never made himsell the great man, or took ony airs in the company. I've seen him in a' moods in these jaunts, grave and gay, daft and serious, sober and drunk—(this, however, even in our wildest rambles, was rare)—but, drunk or sober, he was aye the gentleman. He lookit excessively heavy and stupid when he was *fou*, but he was never out o' gude humour.'

These are questionable doings, questionably narrated; but what shall we say of the following, wherein the element of whisky plays an extremely prominent part? We will say that it is questionable, and not exemplary, whisky mounting clearly beyond its level; that indeed charity hopes and conjectures here may be some aggravating of features for effect's sake!

'On reaching, one evening, some *Charlieshope* or other (I forget the name) among those wildernesses, they found a kindly reception, as usual; but, to their agreeable surprise, after some days of hard living, a measured and orderly hospitality as respected liquor. Soon after supper, at which a bottle of elderberry-wine alone had been produced, a young student of divinity, who happened to be in the house, was called upon to take the "big ha' Bible," in the good old fashion of "Burns's Saturday Night;" and some progress had been already made in the service, when the good-man of the farm, whose "tendency," as Mr. Mitchell says, "was soporific," scandalised his wife and the dominie by starting suddenly from his knees, and, rubbing his eyes, with a stentorian exclamation of "By —, here's the keg at last!" and in tumbled, as he spoke the word, a couple of sturdy herdsman, whom, on hearing a day before of the advocate's approaching visit, he had despatched to a certain smuggler's haunt, at some considerable distance, in quest of a supply of *run* brandy from the Solway Frith. The pious "exercise" of the household was hopelessly interrupted. With a

* Vol. i. pp. 15-17.

* Loud tune: German, *lallen*.

thousand apologies for his hitherto shabby entertainment, this jolly Elliot, or Armstrong, had the welcome *keg* mounted on the table without a moment's delay; and gentle and simple, not forgetting the dominie, continued carousing about it until daylight streamed in upon the party. Sir Walter Scott seldom failed, when I saw him in company with his Liddesdale companion, to mimic with infinite humour the sudden outburst of his old host on hearing the clatter of horses' feet, which he knew to indicate the arrival of the keg—the consternation of the dame—and the rueful despair with which the young clergyman closed the book.*

From which Liddesdale *raids*, which we here, like the young clergyman, close not without a certain rueful despair, let the reader draw what nourishment he can. They evince satisfactorily, though in a rude manner, that in those days young advocates, and Scott like the rest of them, were *alive* and alert,—whisky sometimes preponderating. But let us now fancy that the jovial young Advocate has pleaded his first cause; has served in yeomanry drills; been wedded, been promoted Sheriff, without romance in either case; dabbling a little the while, under guidance of Monk Lewis, in translations from the German, in translation of Goethe's *Götz with the Iron Hand*;—and we have arrived at the threshold of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and the opening of a new century.

Hitherto, therefore, there has been made out, by Nature and Circumstance working together, nothing unusually remarkable, yet still something very valuable; a stout effectual man of thirty, full of broad sagacity and good-humour, with faculties in him fit for any burden of business, hospitality, and duty, legal or civic:—with what other faculties in him no one could yet say. As indeed, who, after life-long inspection, can say what is in any man? The uttered part of a man's life, let us always repeat, bears to the unuttered unconscious part a small unknown proportion; he himself never knows it, much less do others. Give him room, give him *impulse*; he reaches down to the Infinite with that so straitly-imprisoned soul of his; and *can* do miracles if need be! It is one of the comfortablest truths that great men abound, though in the unknown state. Nay, as above hinted, our greatest, being also by nature our *quietest*, are perhaps those that remain unknown! Philosopher Fichte took comfort in this belief, when from all pulpits and editorial desks, and publications periodical and stationary, he could hear nothing but the infinite chattering and twittering of commonplace become ambitious; and in the infinite stir of motion nowhither, and of din which should have been silence, all seemed churned into one tempestuous yeasty froth, and the stern Fichte almost desired 'taxes on knowledge' to allay it a little;—he comforted himself, we say, by the unshaken belief that Thought did still exist in Germany; that thinking men, each in his own corner, were verily doing their work, though in a silent latent manner.†

Walter Scott, as a latent Walter, had never amused all men for a score of years in the course of centuries and eternities, or gained and lost several hundred thousand pounds sterling by Literature; but he might have been a happy and by no means a useless,—nay, who knows at bottom whether not a still usefuler Walter! However, that was not his fortune. The Genius of rather a singular age,—an age at once destitute of faith and terrified at scepticism, with little knowledge of its whereabouts, with many sorrows to bear or front, and on the whole with a life to lead in these new circumstances,—had said to himself: What man shall be the temporary comforter, or were it but the spiritual comfit-maker, of this my poor singular age, to solace its dead tedium and manifold sorrows a little? So had the Genius said, looking over all the world: What man? and found him walking the dusty Outer Parliament-house of Edinburgh, with his advocate-gown on his back; and exclaimed: That is he!

The *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* proved to be a well from which flowed one of the broadest rivers. Metrical Romances (which in due time pass into Prose Romances); the old life of men resuscitated for us: it is a mighty word! Not as dead tradition, but as a palpable presence the past stood before us. There they were, the rugged old fighting men; in their doughty simplicity and strength, with their heartiness, their healthiness, their stout self-help, in their iron basnets,

leather jerkins, jack-boots, in their quaintness of manner and costume; there as they looked and lived it was like a new-discovered continent in Literature; for the new century, a bright El Dorado,—or else some fat beatific land of Cockaigne, and Paradise of Donothings. To the opening nineteenth century, in its languor and paralysis, nothing could have been welcomer. Most unexpected, most refreshing and exhilarating; behold our new El Dorado; our fat beatific Lubberland, where one can enjoy and do nothing! It was the time for such a new Literature; and this Walter Scott was the man for it. The *Lays*, the *Marmions*, the *Ladys and Lords of Lake and Isles*, followed in quick succession, with ever-widening profit and praise. How many thousands of guineas were paid-down for each new Lay; how many thousands of copies (fifty and more sometimes) were printed off, then and subsequently; what complimenting, reviewing, renown, and apotheosis there was: all is recorded in these Seven Volumes, which will be valuable in literary statistics. It is a history, brilliant, remarkable; the outlines of which are known to all. The reader shall recall it, or conceive it. No blaze in his fancy is likely to mount higher than the reality did.

At this middle period of his life, therefore, Scott, enriched with copyrights, with new official incomes and promotions, rich in money, rich in repute, presents himself as a man in the full career of success. Health, wealth, and wit to guide them' (as his vernacular Proverb says), all these three are his. The field is open for him, and victory there; his own faculty, his own self, unshackled, victoriously unfolds itself,—the highest blessedness that can befall a man. Wide circle of friends, personal loving admirers; warmth of domestic joys, vouchsafed to all that can trueheartedly nestle down among them; light of radiance and renown given only to a few; who would not call Scott happy? But the happiest circumstance of all is, as we said above, that Scott had in himself a right healthy soul, rendering him little dependent on outward circumstances. Things showed themselves to him not in distortion or borrowed light or gloom, but as they were. Endeavour lay in him and endurance, in due measure; and clear vision of what was to be endeavoured after. Were one to preach a Sermon on Health, as really were worth doing, Scott ought to be the text. Theories are demonstrably true in the way of logic; and then in the way of practice they prove true or else not true: but here is the grand experiment, Do they turn-out well? What boots it that a man's creed is the wisest, that his system of principles is the superfinest, if, when set to work, the life of him does nothing but jar, and fret itself into *holes*? They are untrue in that, were it in nothing else, these principles of his; openly convicted of untruth;—fit only, shall we say, to be rejected as counterfeits, and flung to the dogs? We say not that; but we do say, that ill-health, of body or of mind, is *defeat*, is battle (in a good or in a bad cause) with bad success; that health alone is victory. Let all men, if they can manage it, contrive to be healthy! He who in what cause soever sinks into pain and disease, let him take thought of it; let him know well that it is not good *he* has arrived at yet, but surely evil,—may, or may not be, on the way towards good.

Scott's healthiness showed itself decisively in all things, and nowhere more decisively than in this: the way in which he took his fame; the estimate he from the first formed of fame. Money will buy money's worth; but the thing men call fame, what is it? A gaudy emblazonry, not good for much,—except, indeed, as it too may turn to money. To Scott it was a profitable pleasing superfluity, no necessary of life. Not necessary, now or ever! Seemingly without much effort, but taught by Nature, and the instinct which instructs the sound heart what is good for it and what is not, he felt that he could always do without this same emblazonry of reputation; that he ought to put no trust in it; but be ready at any time to see it pass away from him, and to hold on his way as before. It is incalculable, as we conjecture, what evil he escaped in this manner; what perversions, irritations, mean agonies without a name, he lived wholly apart from, knew nothing of. Happily before fame arrived, he had reached the mature age at which all this was easier to him. What a strange Nemesis lurks in the felicities of men! In thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey, in thy belly it shall be bitter as gall! Some weakly-organised individual, we will say at the age of five-and-twenty, whose main or whole

* Vol. i. pp. 195-199.

† Fichte, *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten*.

talent rests on some prurient susceptibility, and nothing under it but shallowness and vacuum, is clutched hold of by the general imagination, is whirled aloft to the giddy height; and taught to believe the divine-seeming message that he is a great man: such individual seems the luckiest of men: and, alas, is he not the unluckiest? Swallow not the Circe-draught, O weakly-organised individual; it is fell poison; it will dry up the fountains of thy whole existence, and all will grow withered and parched; thou shalt be wretched under the sun!

Is there, for example, a sadder book than that *Life of Byron* by Moore? To omit mere prurient susceptibilities that rest on vacuum, look at poor Byron, who really had much substance in him. Sitting there in his self-exile, with a proud heart striving to persuade itself that it despises the entire created Universe; and far off, in foggy Babylon, let any pitifulest whipster draw pen on him, your proud Byron writhes in torture,—as if the pitiful whipster were a magician, or his pen a galvanic wire struck into the Byron's spinal marrow! Lamentable, despicable,—one had rather be a kitten and cry mew! O son of Adam, great or little, according as thou art lovable, those thou livest with will love thee. Those thou livest *not* with, is it of moment that they have the alphabetic letters of thy name engraved on their memory, with some signpost likeness of thee (as like as I to Hercules) appended to them? It is not of moment; in sober truth, not of any moment at all! And yet, behold, there is no soul now whom thou canst love freely,—from *one* soul only art thou always sure of reverence enough; in presence of no soul is it rightly well with thee! How is thy world become desert; and thou, for the sake of a little babblement of tongues, art poor, bankrupt, insolvent, not in purse, but in heart and mind! 'The Golden Calf of self-love,' says Jean Paul, 'has grown into a burning Phalaris' Bull, to consume its owner and worshipper.' Ambition, the desire of shining and outshining, was the beginning of Sin in this world. The man of letters who founds upon his fame, does he not thereby alone declare himself a follower of Lucifer (named *Satan*, the Enemy), and member of the Satanic school?—

It was in this poetic period that Scott formed his connexion with the Ballantynes; and embarked, though under cover, largely in trade. To those who regard him in the heroic light, and will have *Vates* to signify Prophet as well as Poet, this portion of his biography seems somewhat incongruous. Viewed as it stood in the reality, as he was and as it was, the enterprise, since it proved so unfortunate, may be called lamentable, but cannot be called unnatural. The practical Scott, looking towards practical issues in all things, could not but find hard cash one of the most practical. If by any means cash could be honestly produced, were it by writing poems, were it by printing them, why not? Great things might be done ultimately; great difficulties were at once got rid of,—manifold higgings of booksellers, and contradictions of sinners hereby fell away. A printing and bookselling speculation was not so alien for a maker of books. Voltaire, who indeed got no copyrights, made much money by the war-commissariat, in his time; we believe, by the victualling branch of it. St. George himself, they say, was a dealer in bacon in Cappadocia. A thrifty man will help himself towards his object by such steps as lead to it. Station in society, solid power over the good things of this world, was Scott's avowed object; towards which the precept of precepts is, that of Iago, *Put money in thy purse*.

Here, indeed, it is to be remarked, that perhaps no literary man of any generation has less value than Scott for the immaterial part of his mission in any sense: not only for the fantasy called fame, with the fantastic miseries attendant thereon; but also for the spiritual purport of his work, whether it tended hitherward or thitherward, or had any tendency whatever; and indeed for all purports and results of his working, except such, we may say, as offered themselves to the eye, and could, in one sense or the other, be handled, looked at and buttoned into the breeches-pocket. Somewhat too little of a fantast, this *Vates* of ours! But so it was: in this nineteenth century, our highest literary man, who immeasurably beyond all others commanded the world's ear, had, as it were, no message whatever to deliver to the world; wished not the world to elevate itself, to amend

itself, to do this or to do that, except simply pay him for the books he kept writing. Very remarkable; fittest, perhaps, for an age fallen languid, destitute of faith and terrified at scepticism? Or, perhaps, for quite another sort of age, an age all in peaceable triumphant motion? Be this as it may, surely since Shakespeare's time there has been no great speaker so unconscious of an aim in speaking as Walter Scott. Equally unconscious these two utterances; equally the sincere complete products of the minds they came from: and now if they were equally *deep*? Or, if the one was living fire, and the other was futile phosphorescence and mere resinous firework? It will depend on the relative worth of the minds; for both were equally spontaneous, both equally expressed themselves unencumbered by an ulterior aim. Beyond drawing audiences to the Globe Theatre, Shakespeare contemplated no result in those plays of his. Yet they have had results! Utter with free heart what thy own *daemon* gives thee: if fire from heaven, it shall be well; if resinous firework, it shall be—as well as it could be, or better than otherwise!

The candid judge will, in general, require that a speaker, in so extremely serious a Universe as this of ours, have something to speak about. In the heart of the speaker there ought to be some kind of gospel-tidings, burning till it be uttered; otherwise it were better for him that he altogether held his peace. A gospel somewhat more decisive than this of Scott's,—except to an age altogether languid, without either scepticism or faith! These things the candid judge will demand of literary men; yet withal will recognise the great worth there is in Scott's honesty if, in nothing more, in his being the thing he was with such entire good faith. Here is a something, not a nothing. If no skyborn messenger, heaven looking through his eyes; then neither is it a chimera with his systems, crotchets, cant, fanaticisms, and 'last infirmity of noble minds,'—full of misery, unrest and ill-will; but a substantial, peaceable, terrestrial man. Far as the Earth is under the Heaven does Scott stand below the former sort of character; but high as the cheerful flowery Earth is above waste Tartarus does he stand above the latter. Let him live in his own fashion, and do honour to him in that.

It were late in the day to write criticisms on those Metrical Romances: at the same time, we may remark, the great popularity they had seems natural enough. In the first place, there was the indisputable impress of worth, of genuine human force, in them. This, which lies in some degree, or is thought to lie, at the bottom of all popularity, did to an unusual degree disclose itself in these rhymed romances of Scott's. Pictures were actually painted and presented; human emotions conceived and sympathised with. Considering what wretched Della-Cruscan and other vamping-up of old worn-out tatters was the staple article then, it may be granted that Scott's excellence was superior and supreme. When a Hayley was the main singer, a Scott might well be hailed with warm welcome. Consider whether the *Loves of the Plants*, and even the *Loves of the Triangles*, could be worth the loves and hates of men and women! Scott was as preferable to what he displaced, as the substance is to wearisomely repeated shadow of a substance.

But, in the second place, we may say that the *kind* of worth which Scott manifested was fitted especially for the then temper of men. We have called it an age fallen into spiritual languor, destitute of belief, yet terrified at Scepticism; reduced to live a stunted half-life, under strange new circumstances. Now vigorous whole-life, this was what of all things these delineations offered. The reader was carried back to rough strong times, wherein those maladies of ours had not yet arisen. Brawny fighters, all cased in buff and iron, their hearts too sheathed in oak and triple brass, capriole their huge war-horses, shook their death-doing spears; and went forth in the most determined manner, nothing doubting. The reader sighed, yet not without a reflex solacement: 'O, that I too had lived in those times, had never known these logic-cobwebs, this doubt, this sickliness; and been and felt myself alive among men alive!' Add lastly, that in this new-found poetic world there was no call for effort on the reader's part; what excellence they had, exhibited itself at a glance. It was for the reader, not the El Dorado only, but a beatific land of Cockaigne and Paradise of Donothings! The reader, what the vast majority of readers so long to do, was allowed to lie down at his ease, and be ministered to. What the Turkish bathkeeper is said to ~~do~~

with his frictions, and shampoosings, and fomentings, more or less effectually, that the patient in total idleness may have the delights of activity,—was here to a considerable extent realised. The languid imagination fell back into its rest; an artist was there who could supply it with high-painted scenes, with sequences of stirring action, and whisper to it: Be at ease, and let thy tepid element be comfortable to thee. 'The rude man,' says a critic, 'requires only to see something going on. The man of more refinement must be made to feel. The man of complete refinement must be made to reflect.'

We named the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* the fountain from which flowed this great river of Metrical Romances; but according to some they can be traced to a still higher, obscurer spring—to Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen with the Iron Hand*; of which, as we have seen, Scott in his earlier days executed a translation. Dated a good many years ago, the following words in a criticism on Goethe are found written; which probably are still new to most readers of this Review:

'The works just mentioned, *Götz* and *Werter*, though noble specimens of youthful talent, are still not so much distinguished by their intrinsic merits as by their splendid fortune. It would be difficult to name two books which have exercised a deeper influence on the subsequent literature of Europe than these two performances of a young author; his first-fruits, the produce of his twenty-fourth year. *Werter* appeared to seize the hearts of men in all quarters of the world, and to utter for them the word which they had long been waiting to hear. As usually happens too, this same word, once uttered, was soon abundantly repeated; spoken in all dialects, and chanted through all notes of the gamut, till the sound of it had grown a weariness rather than a pleasure. Sceptical sentimentality, view-hunting, love, friendship, suicide, and desperation became a staple of literary ware; and though the epidemic, after a long course of years, subsided in Germany, it reappeared with various modifications in other countries, and everywhere abundant traces of its good and bad effects are still to be discerned. The fortune of *Berlichingen with the Iron Hand*, though less sudden, was by no means less exalted. In his own country, *Götz*, though he now stands solitary and childless, became the parent of an innumerable progeny of chivalry plays, feudal delineations, and poetico-antiquarian performances; which, though long ago deceased, made noise enough in their day and generation: and with ourselves his influence has been perhaps still more remarkable. Sir Walter Scott's first literary enterprise was a translation of *Götz von Berlichingen*; and, if genius could be communicated like instruction, we might call this work of Goethe's the prime cause of *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*, with all that has followed from the same creative hand. Truly, a grain of seed that has lighted in the right soil! For if not firmer and fairer, it has grown to be taller and broader than any other tree; and all the nations of the earth are still yearly gathering of its fruit.'

How far *Götz von Berlichingen* actually affected Scott's literary destination, and whether without it the rhymed romances, and then the prose romances of the Author of *Waverley*, would not have followed as they did, must remain a very obscure question; obscure, and not important. Of the fact, however, there is no doubt, that these two tendencies, which may be named *Götzism* and *Werterism*, of the former of which Scott was representative with us, have made, and are still in some quarters making the tour of all Europe. In Germany too there was this affectionate half-regretful looking-back into the Past; Germany had its buff-belted watch-tower period in literature, and had even got done with it before Scott began. Then as to *Werterism*, had not we English our Byron and his genus? No form of *Werterism* in any other country had half the potency; as our Scott carried Chivalry Literature to the ends of the world, so did our Byron *Werterism*. France, busy with its Revolution and Napoleon, had little leisure at the moment for *Götzism* or *Werterism*; but it has had them both since, in a shape of its own: witness the whole 'Literature of Desperation' in our own days; the beggarliest form of *Werterism* yet seen, probably its expiring final form: witness also, at the other extremity of the scale, a noble-gifted Chateaubriand, *Götz* and *Werter* both in one.—Curious: how all Europe is but like a set of parishes of the same country; participant of the selfsame influences, even since the Crusades, and earlier;—and these glorious wars of ours are but like parish-brawls, which begin in mutual ignorance, intoxication, and boastful speech; which end in broken windows, damage, waste, and bloody noses; and which one hopes the general good sense is now in the way towards putting down, in some measure!

But leaving this to be as it can, what it concerned us here to remark, was that British *Werterism*, in the shape of those Byron

Poems, so potent and poignant, produced on the languid appetite of men a mighty effect. This too was a 'class of feelings deeply important to modern minds; feelings which arise from *passion incapable of being converted into action*, which belong to an age as indolent, cultivated, and unbelieving as our own!' The 'languid age without either faith or scepticism' turned towards Byronism with an interest altogether peculiar: here, if no cure for its miserable paralysis and languor, was at least an indignant statement of the misery; an indignant Ernulphus' curse read over it,—which all men felt to be something. Half-regretful lookings into the Past gave place, in many quarters, to Ernulphus' cursings of the Present. Scott was among the first to perceive that the day of Metrical Chivalry Romances was declining. He had held the sovereignty for some half-score of years, a comparatively long lease of it; and now the time seemed come for dethronement, for abdication: an unpleasant business; which however he held himself ready, as a brave man will, to transact with composure and in silence. After all, Poetry was not his staff of life; Poetry had already yielded him much money; *this* at least it would not take back from him. Busy always with editing, with compiling, with multiplex official commercial business, and solid interests, he beheld the coming change with unmoved eye.

Resignation he was prepared to exhibit in this matter;—and now behold there proved to be no need of resignation. Let the Metrical Romance become a Prose one; shake off its rhyme-fetters, and try a wider sweep! In the spring of 1814 appeared *Waverley*; an event memorable in the annals of British Literature; in the annals of British Bookselling thrice and four times memorable. Byron sang, but Scott narrated; and when the song had sung itself out through all variations onwards to the *Don Juan* one, Scott was still found narrating, and carrying the whole world along with him. All bygone popularity of chivalry-lays was swallowed up in a far greater. What 'series' followed out of *Waverley*, and how and with what result, is known to all men; was witnessed and watched with a kind of rapt astonishment by all. Hardly any literary reputation ever rose so high in our Island; no reputation at all ever spread so wide. Walter Scott became Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, of Abbotsford; on whom Fortune seemed to pour her whole cornucopia of wealth, honour, and worldly good; the favourite of Princes and of Peasants, and all intermediate men. His 'Waverley series,' swift-following one on the other, apparently without end, was the universal reading; looked for like an annual harvest, by all ranks, in all European countries.

A curious circumstance superadded itself, that the author though known was unknown. From the first most people suspected, and soon after the first, few intelligent persons much doubted, that the Author of *Waverley* was Walter Scott. Yet a certain mystery was still kept up; rather piquant to the public; doubtless very pleasant to the author, who saw it all; who probably had not to listen, as other hapless individuals often had, to this or the other long-drawn 'clear-proof at last,' that the author was not Walter Scott, but a certain astonishing Mr. So-and-so;—one of the standing miseries of human life in that time. But for the privileged Author it was like a king travelling incognito. All men know that he is a high king, chivalrous Gustaf or Kaiser Joseph; but he mingles in their meetings without cumber of etiquette or lonesome ceremony, as Chevalier du Nord, or Count of Lorraine: he has none of the weariness of royalty, and yet all the praise, and the satisfaction of hearing it with his own ears. In a word, the *Waverley* Novels circulated and reigned triumphant; to the general imagination the 'Author of *Waverley*' was like some living mythological personage, and ranked among the chief wonders of the world.

How a man lived and demeaned himself in such unwonted circumstances, is worth seeing. We would gladly quote from Scott's correspondence of this period; but that does not much illustrate the matter. His letters, as above stated, are never without interest, yet also seldom or never very interesting. They are full of cheerfulness, of wit, and ingenuity; but they do not treat of aught intimate; without impeaching their sincerity—what is called sincerity—one may say they do not, in any case whatever, proceed from the innermost parts of the mind. Conventional forms, due consideration of your own and your correspondent's

pretensions and vanities, are at no moment left out of view. The epistolary stream runs on, lucid, free, glad-flowing; but always, as it were, *parallel* to the real substance of the matter, never coincident with it. One feels it hollowish under foot. Letters they are of a most humane man of the world, even exemplary in that kind; but with the man of the world always visible in them;—as indeed it was little in Scott's way to speak, perhaps even with himself, in any other fashion. We select rather some glimpses of him from Mr. Lockhart's record. The first is of dining with Royalty or Prince-Regentship itself; an almost official matter:

'On hearing from Mr. Croker (then Secretary to the Admiralty) that Scott was to be in town by the middle of March (1815), the Prince said: "Let me know when he comes, and I'll get up a snug little dinner that will suit him;" and, after he had been presented and graciously received at the levee, he was invited to dinner accordingly, through his excellent friend Mr. Adam (now Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court in Scotland), who at that time held a confidential office in the royal household. The Regent had consulted with Mr. Adam, also, as to the composition of the party. "Let us have," said he, "just a few friends of his own, and the more Scotch the better;" and both the Commissioner and Mr. Croker assure me that the party was the most interesting and agreeable one in their recollection. It comprised, I believe, the Duke of York—the Duke of Gordon (then Marquess of Huntly)—the Marquess of Hertford (then Lord Yarmonth)—the Earl of Fife—and Scott's early friend, Lord Melville. "The Prince and Scott," says Mr. Croker, "were the two most brilliant story-tellers, in their several ways, that I ever happened to meet; they were both aware of their forte, and both exerted themselves that evening with delightful effect. On going home, I really could not decide which of them had shone the most. The Regent was enchanted with Scott, as Scott with him; and on all his subsequent visits to London, he was a frequent guest at the royal table." The Lord Chief Commissioner remembers that the Prince was particularly delighted with the poet's anecdotes of the old Scotch judges and lawyers, which his Royal Highness sometimes capped by ludicrous traits of certain ermine sages of his own acquaintance. Scott told, among others, a story, which he was fond of telling, of his old friend the Lord Justice-Clerk Braxfield; and the commentary of his Royal Highness on hearing it amused Scott, who often mentioned it afterwards. The anecdote is this: Braxfield, whenever he went on a particular circuit, was in the habit of visiting a gentleman of good fortune in the neighbourhood of one of the assize towns, and staying at least one night, which, being both of them ardent chess-players, they usually concluded with their favourite game. One Spring circuit the battle was not decided at daybreak; so the Justice-Clerk said: "Weel, Donald, I must e'en come back this gate, and let the game lie ower for the present;" and back he came in October, but not to his old friend's hospitable house; for that gentleman had in the interim been apprehended on a capital charge (of forgery), and his name stood on the *Porteous Roll*, or list of those who were about to be tried under his former guest's auspices. The laird was indicted and tried accordingly, and the jury returned a verdict of *guilty*. Braxfield forthwith put on his cocked hat (which answers to the black cap in England), and pronounced the sentence of the law in the usual terms—"To be hanged by the neck until you be dead; and may the Lord have mercy upon your unhappy soul!" Having concluded this awful formula in his most sonorous cadence, Braxfield, dismounting his formidable beaver, gave a familiar nod to his unfortunate acquaintance, and said to him in a sort of chuckling whisper: "And now, Donald my man, I think I've checkmated you for ance." The Regent laughed heartily at this specimen of Macqueen's brutal humour; and "I faith, Walter," said he, "this old big-wig seems to have taken things as coolly as my tyrannical self. Don't you remember Tom Moore's description of me at breakfast—

"The table spread with tea and toast,
Death-warrants and the *Morning Post*?"

'Towards midnight, the Prince called for "a bumper, with all the honours, to the Author of *Waverley*;" and looked significantly, as he was charging his own glass, to Scott. Scott seemed somewhat puzzled for a moment, but instantly recovering himself, and filling his glass to the brim, said: "Your Royal Highness looks as if you thought I had some claim to the honours of this toast. I have no such pretensions; but shall take good care that the real Simon Pure hears of the high compliment that has now been paid him." He then drank off his claret; and joined with a stentorian voice in the cheering, which the Prince himself timed. But before the company could resume their seats, his Royal Highness: "Another of the same, if you please, to the Author of *Marmion*,—and now, Walter my man, I have checkmated you for ance." The second bumper was followed by cheers still more prolonged; and Scott then rose, and returned thanks in a short address, which struck the Lord Chief Commissioner as "alike grave and graceful." This story has been circulated in a very perverted shape. * * * Before he left town he again dined at Carlton House, when the party was a still smaller one than before, and the merriment if possible still more free. That nothing might be wanting, the Prince sang several capital songs.*

Or take, at a very great interval in many senses, this glimpse of another dinner, altogether *unofficially* and much better described.

* Vol. iii. pp. 340-343.

It is James Ballantyne the printer and publisher's dinner, in St. John Street, Canongate, Edinburgh, on the birth-eve of a *Waverley Novel*:

'The feast was, to use one of James's own favourite epithets, *gorgeous*; an aldermanic display of turtle and venison, with the suitable accompaniments of iced punch, potent ale, and generous Madeira. When the cloth was drawn, the burly praeses arose, with all he could muster of the port of John Kemble, and spouted with a sonorous voice the formula of Macbeth,

"Fill full!
I drink to the general joy of the whole table!"

This was followed by "the King, God bless him!" and second came—"Gentlemen, there is another toast which never has been nor shall be omitted in this house of mine: I give you the health of Mr. Walter Scott, with three times three!" All honour having been done to this health, and Scott having briefly thanked the company, with some expressions of warm affection to their host, Mrs. Ballantyne retired;—the bottles passed round twice or thrice in the usual way; and then James rose once more, every vein on his brow distended; his eyes solemnly fixed on vacancy, to propose, not as before in his stentorian key, but with "bated breath," in the sort of whisper by which a stage-conspirator thrills the gallery,—"*Gentlemen, a bumper to the immortal Author of Waverley!*"—The uproar of cheering, in which Scott made a fashion of joining, was succeeded by deep silence; and then Ballantyne proceeded—

"In his Lord-Burleigh look, serene and serious,
A something of imposing and mysterious"—

to lament the obscurity in which his illustrious but too modest correspondent still chose to conceal himself from the plaudits of the world; to thank the company for the manner in which the *nominis umbra* had been received; and to assure them that the Author of *Waverley* would, when informed of the circumstance, feel highly delighted—"the proudest hour of his life," etc. etc. The cool, demure fun of Scott's features during all this mummery was perfect; and Erskine's attempt at a *gay nonchalance* was still more ludicrously meritorious. Aldiborontiphoscopfiorno, however, bursting as he was, knew too well to allow the new Novel to be made the subject of discussion. Its name was announced, and success to it crowned another cup; but after that, no more of Jedediah. To cut the thread, he rolled out unbidden some one of his many theatrical songs, in a style that would have done no dishonour to almost any orchestra—*The Maid of Lodi*, or perhaps *The Bay of Biscay, O!*—or *The sweet little cherub that sits up aloft*. Other toasts followed, interspersed with ditties from other performers; old George Thomson, the friend of Burns, was ready, for one, with *The Moorland Wedding*, or *Willie brew'd a peck o' maut*;—and so it went on, until Scott and Erskine, with any clerical or very staid personage that had chanced to be admitted, saw fit to withdraw. Then the scene was changed. The claret and olives made way for broiled bones and a mighty bowl of punch; and when a few glasses of the hot beverage had restored his powers, James opened *ore rotundo* on the merits of the forthcoming Romance. "One chapter—one chapter only!" was the cry. After "*Nay, by'r Lady, nay!*" and a few more coy shifts, the proof-sheets were at length produced, and James, with many a prefatory hem, read aloud what he considered as the most striking dialogue they contained.

'The first I heard so read was the interview between Jeanie Deans, the Duke of Argyle, and Queen Caroline, in Richmond Park; and, notwithstanding some spice of the pompous tricks to which he was addicted, I must say he did the inimitable scene great justice. At all events, the effect it produced was deep and memorable; and no wonder that the exulting typographer's *one bumper more to Jedediah Cleishbotham* preceded his parting-stave, which was uniformly *The Last Words of Marmion*, executed certainly with no contemptible rivalry of Braham.*

Over at Abbotsford things wear a still more prosperous aspect. Scott is building there, by the pleasant banks of the Tweed; he has bought and is buying land there; fast as the new gold comes in for a new *Waverley Novel*, or even faster, it changes itself into moory acres, into stone, and hewn or planted wood:

'About the middle of February' (1820), says Mr. Lockhart, 'it having been ere that time arranged that I should marry his eldest daughter in the course of the spring,—I accompanied him and part of his family on one of those flying visits to Abbotsford, with which he often indulged himself on a Saturday during term. Upon such occasions, Scott appeared at the usual hour in court, but wearing, instead of the official suit of black, his country morning-dress, green jacket and so forth, under the clerk's gown.—At noon, when the Court broke up, Peter Mathieson was sure to be in attendance in the Parliament Close; and, five minutes after, the gown had been tossed off; and Scott, rubbing his hands for glee, was under weigh for Tweedside. As we proceeded, etc.

'Next morning there appeared at breakfast John Ballantyne, who had at this time a shooting or hunting-box a few miles off, in the vale of the Leader, and with him Mr. Constable, his guest; and it being a fine clear day, as soon as Scott had read the church-service and one of Jeremy Taylor's sermons, we all sallied out before noon on a perambulation of his upland territories; Maida (the hound) and the rest of the favourites accompanying our march. At starting we were joined by the constant henchman, Tom Purdie,—and I may save myself the trouble of any

* Vol. iv. pp. 166-168.

attempts to describe his appearance, for his master has given us an inimitably true one in introducing a certain personage of his Red-gauntlet:—"He was, perhaps, sixty years old; yet his brow was not much furrowed, and his jet-black hair was only grizzled, not whitened, by the advance of age. All his motions spoke strength unabated; and, though rather under-sized, he had very broad shoulders, was square-made, thin-flanked, and apparently combined in his frame muscular strength and activity; the last somewhat impaired, perhaps, by years, but the first remaining in full vigour. A hard and harsh countenance; eyes far sunk under projecting eyebrows, which were grizzled like his hair; a wide mouth, furnished from ear to ear with a range of unimpaired teeth of uncommon whiteness, and a size and breadth which might have become the jaws of an ogre, completed this delightful portrait." Equip this figure in Scott's cast-off green jacket, white hat and drab trousers; and imagine that years of kind treatment, comfort, and the honest consequence of a confidential *groom* had softened away much of the hardness and harshness originally impressed on the visage by anxious penury, and the sinister habits of a black-fisher;—and the Tom Purdie of 1820 stands before us.

"We were all delighted to see how completely Scott had recovered his bodily vigour, and none more so than Constable, who, as he puffed and panted after him, up one ravine and down another, often stopped to wipe his forehead, and remarked, that "it was not every author who should lead him such a dance." But Purdie's face shone with rapture as he observed how severely the swag-bellied bookseller's activity was tasked. Scott exclaimed exultingly, though, perhaps, for the tenth time: "This will be a glorious spring for our trees, Tom!"—"You may say that, Sheriff," quoth Tom,—and then lingering a moment for Constable—"My cerry," he added, scratching his head, "and I think it will be a grand season for our bulks too." But indeed Tom always talked of our bulks, as if they had been as regular products of the soil as our aits and our birks. Having threaded first the Helleleugh and then the Rhymer's Glen, we arrived at Huntly Burn, where the hospitality of the kind *Weird Sisters*, as Scott called the *Mis Fergusons*, reanimated our exhausted bibliopoles, and gave them courage to extend their walk a little farther down the same famous brook. Here there was a small cottage in a very sequestered situation (named Chiefwood), by making some little additions to which Scott thought it might be converted into a suitable summer residence for his daughter and future son-in-law. As we walked homeward, Scott being a little fatigued, laid his left hand on Tom's shoulder, and leaned heavily for support, chatting to his "Sunday pony," as he called the affectionate fellow, just as freely as with the rest of the party; and Tom put in his word shrewdly and manfully, and grinned and grunted whenever the joke chanced to be within his apprehension. It was easy to see that his heart swelled within him from the moment the Sheriff got his collar in his grips.[†]

That Abbotsford became infested to a great degree with tourists, wonder-hunters, and all that fatal species of people, may be supposed. Solitary Ettrick saw itself populous: all paths were beaten with the feet and hoofs of an endless miscellany of pilgrims. As many as 'sixteen parties' have arrived at Abbotsford in one day; male and female; peers, Socinian preachers, whatsoever was distinguished, whatsoever had love of distinction in it! Mr. Lockhart thinks there was no literary shrine ever so bespangled, except Ferney in Voltaire's time, who, however, was not half so accessible. A fatal species! These are what Schiller calls 'the flesh-flies'; buzzing swarms of bluebottles, who never fall where any taint of human glory or other corruptibility is in the wind. So has Nature decreed. Scott's *healthiness*, bodily and mental, his massive solidity of character, nowhere showed itself more decisively than in his manner of encountering this part of his fate. That his bluebottles were blue, and of the usual tone and quality, may be judged. Hear Captain Basil Hall (in a very compressed state):

"We arrived in good time, and found several other guests at dinner. The public rooms are lighted with oil-gas, in a style of extraordinary splendour. The etc.—"Had I a hundred pens, each of which at the same time should separately write down an anecdote, I could not hope to record one-half of those which our host, to use Spenser's expression, "welled out alway."—"Entertained us all the way with an endless string of anecdotes;—"came like a stream of poetry from his lips;—"path maddy and sorely passable, yet I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this mighty magician had rendered this narrow ravine.—"Impossible to touch on any theme, but straightway he has an anecdote to fit it."—"Thus we strolled along, borne, as it were, on the stream of song and story."—"In the evening we had a great feast indeed. Sir Walter asked us if we had ever read *Christabel*."—"Interspersed with these various readings were some hundreds of stories, some quaint, some pathetic."—"At breakfast today we had, as usual, some hundred-and-fifty stories—Gul knows how they came in."—"In any man so gifted—so qualified to take the loftiest, proudest line at the head of the literature, the taste, the imagination of the whole world!"—"For instance, he never sits at any particular place at table, but takes etc. etc.‡

Among such worshippers, arriving in 'sixteen parties a-day,' an ordinary man might have grown buoyant; have felt the god, begun to nod, and seemed to shake the spheres. A slightly splenetic man, possessed of Scott's sense, would have swept his premises clear of them: Let no bluebottle approach here, to disturb a man in his work,—under pain of sugared *squash* (called *quassia*) and king's yellow! The good Sir Walter, like a quiet brave man, did neither. He let the matter take its course: enjoyed what was enjoyable in it; endured what could not well be helped; persisted meanwhile in writing his daily portion of romance-copy, in preserving his composure of heart;—in a word, accommodated himself to this loud-buzzing environment, and made it serve him, as he would have done (perhaps with more ease) to a silent, poor, and solitary one. No doubt it affected him too, and in the lamentablest way fevered his internal life, though he kept it well down; but it affected him *less* than it would have done almost any other man. For his guests were not all of the bluebottle sort; far from that. Mr. Lockhart shall furnish us with the brightest aspect a British Ferney ever yielded, or is like to yield: and therewith we will quit Abbotsford and the dominant and culminant period of Scott's life:

"It was a clear, bright September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine, and all was in readiness for a grand coursing match on Newark Hill. The only guest who had chalked-out other sport for himself was the stanchest of anglers, Mr. Rose; but he too was there on his *shelly*, armed with his salmon-rod and landing-net, and attended by his Hives, and Charlie Purdie, a brother of Tom, in those days the most celebrated fisherman of the district. This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about, to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sibyl, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip; and among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphry Davy, Dr. Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish belles-lettres, Henry Mackenzie. The Man of Feeling, however, was persuaded with some difficulty to resign his steed for the present to his faithful negro follower, and to join Lady Scott in the sociable, until we should reach the ground of our *battue*. Laidaw, on a strong-tailed wiry Highlander, yept *Hodden Grey*, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground as he sat, was the adjutant. But the most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp. He had come for his favourite sport of angling, and had been practising it successfully with Rose, his travelling companion, for two or three days preceding this; but he had not prepared for coursing fields, or had left Charlie Purdie's troop for Sir Walter's on a sudden thought, and his fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brim, surrounded with line upon line of catgut, and innumerable fly-hooks—jack-boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian sartout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white-cord breeches, and well-polished jockey-boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr. Wollaston was in black; and with his noble serene dignity of countenance might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr. Mackenzie, at this time in the 76th year of his age, with a white hat turned up with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog-whistle round his neck, and had, all over, the air of as resolute a devotee to the gay captain of Huntly Burn. Tom Purdie and his subalterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the greyhounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose; but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gambolled about Sibyl Grey, barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

"The order of march had been all settled, and the sociable was just getting under way, when *the Lady Anne* broke from the line, screaming with laughter, and exclaimed: "Papa, papa, I knew you could never think of going without your pet!" Scott looked round, and I rather think there was a blush as well as a smile upon his face, when he perceived a little black pig frisking about his pony, and evidently a self-elected addition to the party of the day. He tried to look stern, and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy soon found a strap round his neck, and was dragged into the background; Scott, watching the retreat, repeated with mock pathos the first verse of an old pastoral song—

"What will I do gin my hoggie die?
My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
My only beast, I had nae mae,
And wow! but I was voggie!"

—the cheers were redoubled—and the squadron moved on.

"This pig had taken, nobody could tell how, a most sentimental attachment to Scott, and was constantly urging its pretensions to be admitted a regular member of his tail along with the greyhounds and terriers: but, indeed, I remember him suffering another summer under the same sort of pertinacity on the part of an affectionate hen. I leave the explanation for philosophers;—but such were the facts. I have too much respect for the vulgarly calumniated donkey, to name him in the

* Overseer; German, *prof.* † Vol. iv. pp. 349-353.
‡ Vol. v. pp. 375-402.

same category of pets with the pig and the hen; but a year or two after this time, my wife used to drive a couple of these animals in a little garden-chair, and whenever her father appeared at the door of our cottage, we were sure to see Hannah More and Lady Morgan (as Anne Scott had wickedly christened them) trotting from their pasture, to lay their noses over the paling, and, as Washington Irving says of the old white-haired hedger with the Parisian snuff-box, "to have a pleasant crack wi' the laird."*

There (at Chiefswood) my wife and I spent this summer and autumn of 1821; the first of several seasons which will ever dwell on my memory as the happiest of my life. We were near enough Abbotsford to partake as often as we liked of its brilliant and constantly varying society; yet could do so without being exposed to the worry and exhaustion of spirit which the daily reception of new-comers entailed upon all the family, except Sir Walter himself. But, in truth, even he was not always proof against the annoyances connected with such a style of open housekeeping. Even his temper sank sometimes under the solemn applauses of learned dulness, the rapid raptures of painted and periwigged dowagers, the horse-leech avidity with which underbred foreigners urged their questions, and the pompous simpers of condescending magnates. When sore beset at home in this way, he would every now and then discover that he had some very particular business to attend to on an outlying part of his estate; and, craving the indulgence of his guests over-night, appear at the cabin in the glen before its inhabitants were astir in the morning. The clatter of Sibyl Grey's hoofs, the yelping of Mustard and Spice, and his own joyous shout of *réveillée* under our windows, were the signal that he had burst his toils, and meant for that day to "take his ease in his inn." On descending, he was to be found seated with all his dogs and ours about him, under a spreading ash that overshadowed half the bank between the cottage and the brook, pointing the edge of his woodman's-axe, and listening to Tom Purdie's lecture touching the plantation that most needed thinning. After breakfast he would take possession of a dressing-room upstairs, and write a chapter of *The Pirate*; and then, having made-up and despatched his packet for Mr. Ballantyne, away to join Purdie wherever the foresters were at work—and sometimes to labour among them as strenuously as John Swanston—until it was time either to rejoin his own party at Abbotsford, or the quiet circle of the cottage. When his guests were few and friendly, he often made them come over and meet him at Chiefswood in a body towards evening; and surely he never appeared to more amiable advantage than when helping his young people with their little arrangements upon such occasions. He was ready with all sorts of devices to supply the wants of a narrow establishment; he used to delight particularly in sipping the wine in a well under the *brae* ere he went out, and hauling up the basket just before dinner was announced,—this primitive device being, he said, what he had always practised when a young housekeeper, and in his opinion

* Vol. v. pp. 7-10.

On this subject let us report an anecdote furnished by a correspondent of our own, whose accuracy we can depend on: "I myself was acquainted with a little Blenheim cocker, one of the smallest, beautifullest and wisest of lap-dogs or dogs, which, though Sir Walter knew it not, was very singular in its behaviour towards him. *Shandy*, so high this remarkable cocker, was extremely shy of strangers: promenading on Prince's Street, which in fine weather used to be crowded in those days, he seemed to live in perpetual fear of being stolen; if anyone but looked at him admiringly, he would draw back with angry timidity, and crouch towards his own lady mistress. One day a tall, irregular, busy-looking man came halting by; the little dog ran towards him, began fawning, frisking, licking at his feet: it was Sir Walter Scott! Had *Shandy* been the most extensive reader of Reviews, he could not have done better. Every time he saw Sir Walter afterwards, which was some three or four times in the course of visiting Edinburgh, he repeated his demonstrations, ran leaping, frisking, licking the author of *Waverley's* feet. The good Sir Walter endured it with good-humour; looked down at the little wise face, at the silky shag-coat of snow-white and chestnut-brown; smiled, and avoided hitting him as they went on,—till a new division of streets or some other obstacle put an end to the interview. In fact he was a strange little fellow, this *Shandy*. He has been known to sit for hours looking out at the summer moon, with the saddest, wisest expression of countenance; altogether like a Werterean Poet. He would have been a poet, I daresay, if he could have found a publisher. But his moral tact was the most amazing. Without reason shown, without word spoken or act done, he took his likings and dislikings; unalterable; really almost unerring. His chief aversion, I should say, was to the genus *quack*, above all to the genus *acrid-quack*; these, though never so clear-starched, bland-smiling, and beneficent, he absolutely would have no trade with. Their very sugar-cake was unavailing. He said with emphasis, as clearly as barking could say it: "Acrid-quack, avaunt!" Would to Heaven many a prime-minister, and high person in authority, had such an invaluable talent! On the whole, there is more in this universe than our philosophy has dreamt of. A dog's instinct is a voice of Nature too; and farther, it has never babbled itself away in idle jargon and hypothesis, but always adhered to the practical, and grown in silence by continual communion with fact. We do the animals injustice. Their body resembles our body, Buffon says; with its four limbs, with its spinal marrow, main organs in the head and so forth: but have they not a kind of soul, equally the rude draught and imperfect imitation of ours? It is a strange, an almost solemn and pathetic thing to see an intelligence imprisoned in that dumb rude form; struggling to express itself out of that;—even as we do out of our imprisonment; and succeed very imperfectly!"

far superior in its results to any application of ice: and in the same spirit, whenever the weather was sufficiently genial, he voted for dining out of doors altogether, which at once got rid of the inconvenience of very small rooms, and made it natural and easy for the gentlemen to help the ladies, so that the paucity of servants went for nothing.*

Surely all this is very beautiful: like a picture of Boccaccio's: the ideal of a country life in our time. Why could it not last? Income was not wanting: Scott's official permanent income was amply adequate to meet the expense of all that was valuable in it; nay, of all that was not harassing, senseless and despicable. Scott had some £2000 a-year without writing books at all. Why should he manufacture and not create, to make more money; and rear mass on mass for a dwelling to himself, till the pile toppled, sank crashing, and buried him in its ruins, when he had a safe pleasant dwelling ready of its own accord? Alas, Scott, with all his health, was *infected*; sick of the fearfullest malady, that of Ambition! To such length had the King's baronetcy, the world's favour and 'sixteen parties a-day,' brought it with him. So the inane racket must be kept up, and rise ever higher. So masons labour, ditchers delve; and there is endless, altogether deplorable correspondence about marble-slabs for tables, wainscoting of rooms, curtains and the trimmings of curtains, orange-coloured or fawn-coloured: Walter Scott, one of the gifted of the world, whom his admirers call the most gifted, must kill himself that he may be a country gentleman, the founder of a race of Scottish lairds.

It is one of the strangest, most tragical histories ever enacted under this sun. So poor a passion can lead so strong a man into such mad extremes. Surely, were not man a fool always, one might say there was something eminently distracted in this, *end* as it would, of a Walter Scott writing daily with the ardour of a steam-engine, that he might make £15,000 a-year and buy upholstery with it. To cover the walls of a stone house in Selkirkshire with nicknacks, ancient armour, and genealogical shields, what can we name it but a being bit with a delirium of a kind? That tract after tract of moorland in the shire of Selkirk should be joined together on parchment and by ring-fence, and named after one's name,—why it is a shabby small-type edition of your vulgar Napoleons, Alexanders, and conquering heroes, not counted venerable by any teacher of men!—

* The whole world was not half so wide
To Alexander when he cried
Because he had but one to subdue,
As was a narrow paltry tub to
Diogenes; who ne'er was said,
For aught that ever I could read,
To whine, put finger i' the eye and sob,
Because he had ne'er another tub.'

Not he! And if, 'looked at from the Moon, which itself is far from Infinitude,' Napoleon's dominions were as small as mine, *what*, by any chance of possibility, could Abbotsford landed-property ever have become? As the Arabs say, there is a black speck, were it no bigger than a bean's eye, in every soul; which, once set it a-working, will overcloud the whole man into darkness and quasi-madness, and hurry him balefully into Night!

With respect to the literary character of these *Waverley Novels*, so extraordinary in their commercial character, there remains, after so much reviewing, good and bad, little that it were profitable at present to say. The great fact about them is, that they were faster written and better paid for than any other books in the world. It must be granted, moreover, that they have a worth far surpassing what is usual in such cases; nay, that if Literature had no task but that of harmlessly amusing indolent languid men, here was the very perfection of Literature; that a man, here more emphatically than ever elsewhere, might fling himself back, exclaiming: 'Be mine to lie on this sofa, and read everlasting Novels of Walter Scott!' The composition, slight as it often is, usually hangs together in some measure, and is a composition. There is a free flow of narrative, of incident and sentiment; an easy masterlike coherence throughout, as if it were the free dash of a master's hand, 'round as the O of Giotto.' † It

* Vol. v. pp. 123, 124.

† 'Venne a Firenze,' (il cortigiano del Papa), 'e andato una mattina in bottega di Giotto, che lavorava, gli chiese un poco di disegno per

is the perfection of extemporaneous writing. Farthermore, surely he were a blind critic who did not recognise here a certain genial sunshiny freshness and picturesqueness; paintings both of scenery and figures, very graceful, brilliant, occasionally full of grace and glowing brightness blended in the softest composure; in fact, a deep sincere love of the beautiful in Nature and Man, and the readiest faculty of expressing this by imagination and by word. No fresher paintings of Nature can be found than Scott's; hardly anywhere a wider sympathy with man. From Davie Deans up to Richard Cœur-de-Lion; from Meg Merrilies to Die Vernon and Queen Elizabeth! It is the utterance of a man of open soul; of a brave, large, free-seeing man, who has a true brotherhood with all men. In joyous picturesqueness and fellow-feeling, freedom of eye and heart; or to say in a word, in general *healthiness* of mind, these Novels prove Scott to have been amongst the foremost writers.

Neither in the higher and highest excellence, of drawing character, is he at any time altogether deficient; though at no time can we call him, in the best sense, successful. His Baillie Jarvies, Dinmonts, Dalgettys (for their name is legion), do look and talk like what they give themselves out for; they are, if not *created* and made poetically alive, yet *deceptively enacted* as a good player might do them. What more is wanted, then? For the reader lying on a sofa, nothing more; yet for another sort of reader, much. It were a long chapter to unfold the difference in drawing a character between a Scott, and a Shakespeare, a Goethe. Yet it is a difference literally immense; they are of different species; the value of the one is not to be counted in the coin of the other. We might say in a short word, which means a long matter, that your Shakespeare fashions his characters from the heart outwards; your Scott fashions them from the skin inwards, never getting near the heart of them! The one set become living men and women; the other amount to little more than mechanical cases, deceptively painted automatons. Compare Fenella with Goethe's Mignon, which, it was once said, Scott had 'done Goethe the honour' to borrow. He has borrowed what he could of Mignon. The small stature, the climbing talent, the trickiness, the *mechanical case*, as we say, he has borrowed; but the soul of Mignon is left behind. Fenella is an unfavourable specimen for Scott; but it illustrates in the aggravated state, what is traceable in all the characters he drew.

To the same purport indeed we are to say that these famed books are altogether addressed to the every-day mind; that for any other mind there is next to no nourishment in them. Opinions, emotions, principles, doubts, beliefs, beyond what the intelligent country gentleman can carry along with him, are not to be found. It is orderly, customary, it is prudent, decent; nothing more. One would say, it lay not in Scott to give much more; getting out of the ordinary range, and attempting the heroic, which is but seldom the case, he falls almost at once into the rose-pink sentimental,—describes the Minerva Press from afar, and hastily quits that course; for none better than he knew it to lead nowhither. On the whole, contrasting *Waverley*, which was carefully written, with most of its followers which were written extempore, one may regret the extempore method. Something very perfect in its kind might have come from Scott; nor was it a low kind: nay, who knows how high, with studious self-concentration, he might have gone; what wealth Nature had implanted in him, which his circumstances, most unkind while seeming to be kindest, had never impelled him to unfold?

But after all, in the loudest blaring and trumpeting of popularity, it is ever to be held in mind, as a truth remaining true forever, that Literature *has* other aims than that of harmlessly amusing indolent languid men: or if Literature have them not, then Literature is a very poor affair; and something else must have them, and must accomplish them, with thanks or without thanks; the thankful or thankless world were not long a world otherwise! Under this head there is little to be sought or found in the

mandarlo a sua Santità. Giotto, che garbatissimo era, prese un foglio, ed in quello con un pennello tinto di rosso, fermato il braccio al fianco per farne compasso, e girato la mano fece un tondo sì pari di sesto e di profilo, che fu a vederlo una maraviglia. Ciò fatto ghignando disse al cortigiano, Eccovi il disegno. . . . Onde il Papa, e molti cortigiani intendenti conobbero perciò, quanto Giotto avanzasse d' eccellenza tutti gli altri pittori del suo tempo. Divolgatasi poi questa cosa, ne nacque il proverbio, che ancora è in uso dirsi a gli uomini di *grossa pasta: Tu sei più tondo che V O di Giotto.*—Vasari, *Vite* (Roma, 1759), l. 46.

Waverley Novels. Not profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for edification, for building up or elevating, in any shape! The sick heart will find no healing here, the darkly-struggling heart no guidance: the Heroic that is in all men no divine awakening voice. We say, therefore, that they do not found themselves on deep interests, but on comparatively trivial ones; not on the perennial, perhaps not even on the lasting. In fact, much of the interest of these Novels results from what may be called contrasts of costume. The phraseology, fashion of arms, of dress and life, belonging to one age, is brought suddenly with singular vividness before the eyes of another. A great effect this; yet by the very nature of it, an altogether temporary one. Consider, brethren, shall not we too one day be antiques, and grow to have as quaint a costume as the rest? The stuffed Dandy, only give him *time*, will become one of the wonderfulest mummies. In antiquarian museums, only two centuries hence, the Steeple-hat will hang on the next peg to Franks and Company's patent, antiquarians deciding which is uglier: and the Stulz swallow-tail, one may hope, will seem as incredible as any garment that ever made ridiculous the respectable back of man. Not by slashed breeches, steeple-hats, buff-belts, or antiquated speech, can romance-heroes continue to interest us; but simply and solely, in the long-run, by being men. Buff-belts and all manner of jerkins and costumes are transitory; man alone is perennial. He that has gone deeper into this than other men, will be remembered longer than they; he that has not, not. Tried under this category, Scott, with his clear practical insight, joyous temper, and other sound faculties, is not to be accounted little,—among the ordinary circulating-library heroes he might well pass for a demi-god. Not little; yet neither is he great; there were greater, more than one or two, in his own age: among the great of all ages, one sees no likelihood of a place for him.

What, then, is the result of these *Waverley Romances*? Are they to amuse one generation only? One or more! As many generations as they can; but not all generations: ah no, when our swallow-tail has become fantastic as trunk-hose, they will cease to amuse!—Meanwhile, as we can discern, their results have been several-fold. First of all, and certainly not least of all, have they not perhaps had this result: that a considerable portion of mankind has hereby been sated with mere amusement, and set on seeking something better? Amusement in the way of reading can go no farther, can do nothing better, by the power of man; and men ask: Is this what it can do? Scott, we reckon, carried several things to their ultimatum and crisis, so that change became inevitable: a great service, though an indirect one.

Secondly, however, we may say, these Historical Novels have taught all men this truth, which looks like a truism, and yet was as good as unknown to writers of history and others, till so taught: that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state-papers, controversies, and abstractions of men. Not abstractions were they, not diagrams and theorems; but men, in buff or other coats and breeches, with colour in their cheeks, with passions in their stomach, and the idioms, features and vitalities of very men. It is a little word this; inclusive of great meaning! History will henceforth have to take thought of it. Her faint hearsays of 'philosophy teaching by experience' will have to exchange themselves everywhere for direct inspection and embodiment: this, and this only, will be counted experience; and till once experience have got in, philosophy will reconcile herself to wait at the door. It is a great service, fertile in consequences, this that Scott has done; a great truth laid open by him;—correspondent indeed to the substantial nature of the man; to his solidity and veracity even of imagination, which, with all his lively discursiveness, was the characteristic of him.

A word here as to the extempore style of writing, which is getting much celebrated in these days. Scott seems to have been a high proficient in it. His rapidity was extreme; and the matter produced was excellent, considering that the circumstances under which some of his Novels, when he could not himself write, were dictated, are justly considered wonderful. It is a valuable faculty this of ready-writing; nay farther, for Scott's purpose it was clearly the only good mode. By much labour he could not have added one guinea to his copyright; nor could the reader on the sofa have lain a whit more at ease. It was in all ways necessary that these works should be produced rapidly; and, round or not, be

thrown off like Giotto's O. But indeed, in all things, writing or other, which a man engages in, there is the indispensable beauty in knowing *how to get done*. A man frets himself to no purpose; he has not the sleight of the trade; he is not a craftsman, but an unfortunate borer and bungler, if he know not when to have done. Perfection is unattainable: no carpenter ever made a mathematically accurate right-angle in the world; yet all carpenters know when it is right enough, and do not botch it, and lose their wages, by making it too right. Too much painstaking speaks disease in one's mind, as well as too little. The adroit sound-minded man will endeavour to spend on each business approximately what of pains it deserves; and with a conscience void of remorse will dismiss it then. All this in favour of easy-writing shall be granted, and, if need were, enforced and inculcated.

And yet, on the other hand, it shall not less but more strenuously be inculcated, that in the way of writing, no great thing was ever, or will ever be done with ease, but with difficulty! Let ready-writers with any faculty in them lay this to heart. Is it with ease, or not with ease, that a man shall *do his best*, in any shape; above all, in this shape justly named of 'soul's travail,' working in the deep places of thought, embodying the True out of the Obscure and Possible, environed on all sides with the uncreated False? Not so, now or at any time. The experience of all men belies it; the nature of things contradicts it. Virgil and Tacitus, were they ready-writers? The whole *Prophecies of Isaiah* are not equal in extent to this cobweb of a Review Article. Shakespeare, we may fancy, wrote with rapidity; but not till he had thought with intensity: long and sore had this man thought, as the seeing eye may discern well, and had dwelt and wrestled amid dark pains and throes,—though his great soul is silent about all that. It was for him to write rapidly at fit intervals, being ready to do it. And herein truly lies the secret of the matter: such swiftness of mere writing, after due energy of preparation, is doubtless the right method; the hot furnace having long worked and simmered, let the pure gold flow out at one gush. It was Shakespeare's plan; no easy-writer he, or he had never been a Shakespeare. Neither was Milton one of the mob of gentlemen that write with ease; he did not attain Shakespeare's faculty, one perceives, of even writing fast *after* long preparation, but struggled while he wrote. Goethe also tells us he 'had nothing sent him in his sleep;' no page of his but he knew well how it came there. It is reckoned to be the best prose, accordingly, that has been written by any modern. Schiller, as an unfortunate and unhealthy man, '*könnte nie fertig werden*, never could get done;' the noble genius of him struggled not wisely but too well, and wore his life itself heroically out. Or did Petrarch write easily? Dante sees himself 'growing lean' over his *Divine Comedy*; in stern solitary death-wrestle with it, to prevail over it, and do it, if his uttermost faculty may: hence, too, it is done and prevailed over, and the fiery life of it endures forevermore among men.

No: creation, one would think, cannot be easy; your Jove has severe pains, and fire-flames, in the head out of which an armed Pallas is struggling! As for manufacture, that is a different matter, and may become easy or not easy, according as it is taken up. Yet of manufacture too, the general truth is that, given the manufacturer, it will be worthy in direct proportion to the pains bestowed upon it; and worthless always, or nearly so, with no pains. Cease, therefore, O ready-writer, to brag openly of thy rapidity and facility; to thee (if thou be in the manufacturing line) it is a benefit, an increase of wages; but to me it is sheer loss, worsening of my pennyworth: why wilt thou brag of it to me? Write easily, by steam if thou canst contrive it, and canst sell it; but hide it like virtue! 'Easy writing,' said Sheridan, 'is sometimes d—d hard reading.' Sometimes; and always it is sure to be rather useless reading, which indeed (to a creature of few years and much work) may be reckoned the hardest of all.

Scott's productive facility amazed everybody; and set Captain Hall, for one, upon a very strange method of accounting for it without miracle;—for which see his *Journal*, above quoted from. The Captain, on counting line for line, found that he himself had written in that *Journal* of his almost as much as Scott, at odd hours in a given number of days; 'and as for the invention,' says he, 'it is known that this costs Scott nothing, but comes to him of its own accord.' Convenient indeed!—But for us too Scott's rapidity is great, is a proof and consequence of the solid health of the man, bodily and spiritual; great, but unmiraculous; not greater

than that of many others besides Captain Hall. Admire it, yet with measure. For observe always, there are two conditions in work: let me fix the quality, and *you* shall fix the quantity? Any man may get through work rapidly who easily satisfies himself about it. Print the *talk* of any man, there will be a thick octavo volume daily; make his writing three times as good as his talk, there will be the third part of a volume daily, which still is good work. To write with never such rapidity in a passable manner, is indicative not of a man's genius, but of his habits; it will prove his soundness of nervous system, his practicality of mind, and in fine, that he has the knack of his trade. In the most flattering view, rapidity will betoken health of mind: much also, perhaps most of all, will depend on health of body. Doubt it not, a faculty of easy-writing is attainable by man! The human genius, once fairly set in this direction, will carry it far. William Cobbett, one of the healthiest of men, was a greater improviser even than Walter Scott: his writing, considered as to quality and quantity, of *Rural Rides*, *Registers*, *Grammars*, *Sermons*, *Peter Porcupines*, *Histories of Reformation*, ever-fresh denuncements of *Potatoes* and *Paper-money*, seems to us still more wonderful. Pierre Bayle wrote enormous folios, one sees not on what motive-principle: he flowed-on forever, a mighty tide of ditch-water; and even died flowing, with the pen in his hand. But indeed the most unaccountable ready-writer of all is, probably, the common Editor of a Daily Newspaper. Consider his leading articles; what they treat of, how passably they are done. Straw that has been thrashed a hundred times without wheat; ephemeral sound of a sound; such portent of the hour as all men have seen a hundred times turn out inane: how a man, with merely human faculty, buckles himself nightly with new vigour and interest to this thrashed straw, nightly thrashes it anew, nightly gets-up new thunder about it; and so goes on thrashing and thundering for a considerable series of years; this is a fact remaining still to be accounted for, in human physiology. The vitality of man is great.

Or shall we say, Scott, among the many things he carried towards their ultimatum and crisis, carried this of ready-writing too, that so all men might better see what was in it? It is a valuable consummation. Not without results;—results, at some of which Scott as a Tory politician would have greatly shuddered. For if once Printing have grown to be as Talk, then DEMOCRACY (if we look into the roots of things) is not a bugbear and probability, but a certainty, and event as good as come! 'Inevitable seems it me.' But leaving this, sure enough the triumph of ready-writing appears to be even now; everywhere the ready-writer is found bragging strangely of his readiness. In a late translated *Don Carlos*, one of the most indifferent translations ever done with any sign of ability, a hitherto unknown individual is found assuring his reader: 'The reader will possibly think it an excuse, when I assure him that the whole piece was completed within the space of ten weeks, that is to say, between the sixth of January and the eighteenth of March of this year (inclusive of a fortnight's interruption from over-exertion); that I often translated twenty pages a-day, and that the fifth act was the work of five days.*' O hitherto unknown individual, what is it to me what time it was the work of, whether five days or five decades of years? The only question is: How well hast thou done it?

So, however, it stands: the genius of Extempore irresistibly lording it, advancing on us like ocean-tides, like Noah's deluges—of ditch-water! The prospect seems one of the lamentablest. To have all Literature swum away from us in watery Extempore, and a spiritual time of Noah supervene? That surely is an awful reflection; worthy of dyspeptic Matthew Bramble in a London fog! Be of comfort, O splenetic Matthew; it is not Literature they are swimming away; it is only Book-publishing and Book-selling. Was there not a Literature *before* Printing or Faust of Mentz, and yet men wrote extempore? Nay, before Writing or Cadmus of Thebes, and yet men spoke extempore? Literature is the Thought of thinking Souls; this, by the blessing of God, can in no generation be swum away, but remains with us to the end.

Scott's career, of writing impromptu novels to buy farms

* *Don Carlos*, a Dramatic Poem, from the German of Schiller. Mannheim and London, 1837.

with, was not of a kind to terminate voluntarily, but to accelerate itself more and more; and one sees not to what wise goal it could, in any case, have led him. Bookseller Constable's bankruptcy was not the ruin of Scott; his ruin was, that ambition, and even false ambition, had laid hold of him; that, his way of life was not wise. Whither could it lead? Where could it stop? New farms there remained ever to be bought while new novels could pay for them. More and more success but gave more and more appetite, more and more audacity. The impromptu writing must have waxed ever thinner; declined faster and faster into the questionable category, into the condemnable, into the generally condemned. Already there existed, in secret, everywhere a considerable opposition party; witnesses of the Waverley miracles, but unable to believe in them, forced silently to protest against them. Such opposition party was in the sure case to grow; and even, with the impromptu process ever going on, ever waxing thinner, to draw the world over to it. Silent protest must at length have come to words; harsh truths, backed by harsher facts of a world-popularity overwrought and worn-out, behoved to have been spoken;—such as can be spoken now without reluctance, when they can pain the brave man's heart no more. Who knows? Perhaps it was better ordered to be all *otherwise*. Otherwise, at any rate, it was. One day the Constable mountain, which seemed to stand strong like the other rock mountains, gave suddenly, as the icebergs do, a loud-sounding crack; suddenly, with huge clangor, shivered itself into ice-dust; and sank, carrying much along with it. In one day Scott's high-heaped money-wages became fairy-money and nonentity, in one day the rich man and lord of land saw himself penniless, landless, a bankrupt among creditors.

It was a hard trial. He met it proudly, bravely,—like a brave proud man of the world. Perhaps there had been a prouder way still to have owned honestly that he *was* unsuccessful, then, all bankrupt, broken, in the world's goods and repute; and to have turned elsewhere for some refuge. Refuge did lie elsewhere, but it was not Scott's course, or fashion of mind, to seek it there. To say—Hitherto I have been all in the wrong, and this my fame and pride, now broken, was an empty delusion and spell of accursed witchcraft! It was difficult for flesh and blood! He said: I will retrieve myself, and make my point good yet, or die for it. Silently, like a proud strong man, he girt himself to the Hercules' task, of removing rubbish-mountains, since that was it; of paying large ransoms by what he could still write and sell. In his declining years too; misfortune is doubly and trebly unfortunate that befalls us then. Scott fell to his Hercules' task like a very man, and went on with it unweariedly; with a noble cheerfulness, while his life-strings were cracking, he grappled with it, and wrestled with it, years long, in death-grips, strength to strength;—and it proved the stronger; and his life and heart did crack and break: the cordage of a most strong heart! Over these last writings of Scott, his *Napoleons*, *Demonologies*, *Scotch Histories*, and the rest, criticism, finding still much to wonder at, much to commend, will utter no word of blame; this one word only—Woe is me! the noble war-horse that once laughed at the shaking of the spear, how is he doomed to toil himself dead, dragging ignoble wheels! Scott's descent was like that of a spent projectile; rapid, straight down;—perhaps mercifully so. It is a tragedy, as all life is; one proof more that Fortune stands on a restless *globe*; that Ambition, literary, warlike, politic, pecuniary, never yet profited any man.

Our last extract shall be from Volume Sixth: a very tragical one. Tragical, yet still beautiful; waste Ruin's havoc borrowing a kind of sacredness from a yet sterner visitation, that of Death! Scott has withdrawn into a solitary lodging-house in Edinburgh, to do daily the day's work there; and had to leave his wife at Abbotsford in the last stage of disease. He went away silently; looked silently at the sleeping face he scarcely hoped ever to see again. We quote from a Diary he had begun to keep in those months, on hint from Byron's *Ravenna Journal*: copious sections of it render this Sixth Volume more interesting than any of the former ones:

Abbotsford, May 11 (1826).— * * * It withers my heart to think of it, and to recollect that I can hardly hope again to seek confidence and counsel from that ear, to which all might safely be confided. But in her present lethargic state, what would my attendance have availed?—and Anne has promised close and constant intelligence. I must dine with *James Ballantyne to-day en famille*. I cannot help it; but would rather

be at home and alone. However, I can go out too. I will not yield to the barren sense of hopelessness which struggles to invade me.

Edinburgh, Mrs. Brown's lodgings, North St. David Street—May 12.—I passed a pleasant day with kind J. B., which was a great relief from the black dog, which would have worried me at home. He was quite alone.

Well, here I am in Arden. And I may say with Touchstone: "When I was at home I was in a better place;" I must, when there is occasion, draw to my own Baillie Nicol Jarvie's consolation—"One cannot carry the comforts of the Sant Market about with one." Were I at ease in mind, I think the body is very well cared for. Only one other lodger in the house, a Mr. Shandy,—a clergyman, and, despite his name, said to be a quiet one.

May 14.—A fair good-morrow to you, Mr. Sun, who are shining so brightly on these dull walls. Methinks you look as if you were looking as bright on the banks of the Tweed; but look where you will, Sir Sun, you look upon sorrow and suffering.—Hogg was here yesterday, in danger, from having obtained an accommodation of £100 from James Ballantyne, which he is now obliged to repay. I am unable to help the poor fellow, being obliged to borrow myself.

May 15.—Received the melancholy intelligence that all is over at Abbotsford.

Abbotsford, May 16.—She died at nine in the morning, after being very ill for two days—easy at last. I arrived here late last night. Anne is worn out, and has had hysterics, which returned on my arrival. Her broken accents were like those of a child, the language as well as the tones broken, but in the most gentle voice of submission. "Poor mamma—never return again—gone forever—a better place." Then, when she came to herself, she spoke with sense, freedom and strength of mind, till her weakness returned. It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger—what was it then to the father and the husband? For myself, I scarce know how I feel; sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the water that breaks on it. I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is, with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne: an impoverished, an embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk-down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone.—Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.

I have seen her. The figure I beheld is, and is not my Charlotte—my thirty-years companion. There is the same symmetry of form, though those limbs are rigid which were once so gracefully elastic—but that yellow mask, with pinched features, which seems to mock life rather than emulate it, can it be the face that was once so full of lively expression? I will not look on it again. Anne thinks her little changed, because the latest idea she had formed of her mother is as she appeared under circumstances of extreme pain. Mine go back to a period of comparative ease. If I write long in this way, I shall write-down my resolution, which I should rather write-up, if I could.

May 18.— * * * Cerements of lead and of wood already hold her; cold earth must have her soon. But it is not my Charlotte, it is not the bride of my youth, the mother of my children, that will be laid among the ruins of Dryburgh, which we have so often visited in gaiety and pastime. No, no!

May 22.— * * * Well, I am not apt to shrink from that which is my duty, merely because it is painful; but I wish this funeral-day over. A kind of cloud of stupidity hangs about me, as if all were unreal that men seem to be doing and talking.

May 26.— * * * Were an enemy coming upon my house, would I not do my best to fight, although oppressed in spirits; and shall a similar despondency prevent me from mental exertion? It shall not, by Heaven!

Edinburgh, May 30.—Returned to town last night with Charles. This morning resume ordinary habits of rising early, working in the morning, and attending the Court. * * * I finished correcting the proofs for the Quarterly; it is but a flimsy article, but then the circumstances were most untoward.—This has been a melancholy day—most melancholy. I am afraid poor Charles found me weeping. I do not know what other folks feel, but with me the hysterical passion that impels tears is a terrible violence—a sort of throttling sensation—then succeeded by a state of dreaming stupidity, in which I ask if my poor Charlotte can actually be dead.*

This is beautiful as well as tragical. Other scenes, in that Seventh Volume, must come, which will have no beauty, but be tragical only. It is better that we are to end here.

And so the curtain falls; and the strong Walter Scott is with us no more. A possession from him does remain; widely scattered; yet attainable; not inconsiderable. It can be said of him: When he departed, he took a Man's life along with him. No sounder piece of British manhood was put together in that eighteenth century of Time. Alas, his fine Scotch face, with its shaggy honesty, sagacity, and goodness, when we saw it latterly on the Edinburgh streets, was all worn with care, the joy all fled from it;—ploughed deep with labour and sorrow. We shall never forget it; we shall never see it again. Adieu, Sir Walter, pride of all Scotchmen, take our proud and sad farewell!

THE DIAMOND NECKLACE.* [1837.]

CHAPTER I.

AGE OF ROMANCE.

THE Age of Romance has not ceased; it never ceases; it does not, if we will think of it, so much as very sensibly decline. 'The passions are repressed by social forms; great passions no longer show themselves.' Why, there are passions still great enough to replenish Bedlam, for it never wants tenants; to suspend men from bedposts, from improved drops at the west end of Newgate. A passion that explosively shivers asunder the Life it took rise in, ought to be regarded as considerable: more no passion, in the highest hey-day of Romance, yet did. The passions, by grace of the Supernal and also of the Infernal Powers (for both have a hand in it), can never fail us.

And then, as as to 'social forms,' be it granted that they are of the most buckram quality, and bind men up into the pitifulest straitlaced commonplace existence,—you ask: Where is the Romance? In the Scotch way one answers: Where is it not? That very spectacle of an Immortal Nature, with faculties and destiny extending through Eternity, hampered and bandaged up, by nurses, pedagogues, posturermasters, and the tongues of innumerable old women (named 'force of public opinion'); by prejudice, custom, want of knowledge, want of money, want of strength, into, say, the meagre Pattern-Figure that, in these days, meets you in all thoroughfares: a 'God-created Man,' all but abnegating the character of Man; forced to exist automatized, mummy-wise (scarcely in rare moments audible or visible from amid his wrappings and cerements), as Gentleman or Gigman;† and so selling his birthright of Eternity for the three daily meals, poor at best, which Time yields:—is not this spectacle itself highly romantic, tragical, if we had eyes to look at it? The high-born (highest-born, for he came out of Heaven) lies drowning in the despicablest puddles; the priceless gift of Life, which he can have but *once*, for he waited a whole Eternity to be born, and now has a whole Eternity waiting to see what he will do when born,—*this* priceless gift we see strangled slowly out of him by innumerable packthreads; and there remains of the glorious Possibility, which we fondly named Man, nothing but an inanimate mass of foul loss and disappointment, which we wrap in shrouds and bury underground,—surely with well-merited tears. To the Thinker here lies Tragedy enough; the epitome and marrow of all Tragedy whatsoever.

But so few are Thinkers? Ay, Reader, so few think; there is the rub! Not one in the thousand has the smallest turn for thinking; only for passive dreaming and hearsaying, and active babbling by rote. Of the eyes that men do glare withal so few can *see*. Thus is the world become such a fearful confused Treadmill; and each man's task has got entangled in his neighbour's, and pulls it awry; and the Spirit of Blindness, Falsehood, and Distraction, justly named the Devil, continually maintains himself among us; and even hopes (were it not for the Opposition, which by God's grace will also maintain itself) to become supreme. Thus too, among other things, has the Romance of Life gone wholly out of sight: and all History, degenerating into empty invoice-lists of Pitched Battles and Changes of Ministry; or still worse into 'Constitutional History,' or 'Philosophy of History,' or 'Philosophy teaching by Experience,' is become dead, as the Almanacs of other years,—to which species of composition, indeed, it bears in several points of view, no inconsiderable affinity.

'Of all blinds that shut up men's vision,' says one, 'the worst is Self.' How true! How doubly true, if Self, assuming her cunningest, yet miserablist disguise, come on us in never-

ceasing, all-obscurer reflexes from the innumerable Selves of others; not as Pride, not even as real Hunger, but only as Vanity, and the shadow of an imaginary Hunger for Applause; under the name of what we call 'Respectability'! Alas now for our Historian: to his other spiritual deadness (which however, so long as he physically breathes, cannot be considered *complete*) this sad new magic influence is added! Henceforth his Histories must all be screwed-up into the 'dignity of History.' Instead of looking fixedly at the *Thing*, and first of all, and beyond all, endeavouring to *see* it, and fashion a living Picture of it, not a wretched politico-metaphysical Abstraction of it, he has now quite other matters to look to. The Thing lies shrouded, invisible, in thousandfold hallucinations, and foreign air-images. What did the Whigs say of it? What did the Tories? The Priests? The Freethinkers? Above all: What will my own listening circle say of *me* for what I say of it? And then his Respectability in general, as a literary gentleman; his not despicable talent for philosophy! Thus is our poor Historian's faculty directed mainly on two objects: the Writing and the Writer, both of which are quite extraneous; and the Thing written-of fares as we see. Can it be wonderful that Histories, wherein open lying is not permitted, are unromantic? Nay, our very Biographies, how stiff-starched, foisonless, hollow! They stand there respectable; and—what more? Dumb idols; with a skin of delusively-painted waxwork; inwardly empty, or full of rags and bran. In our England especially, which in these days is become the chosen land of Respectability, Life-writing has dwindled to the sorrowfulest condition; it requires a man to be some disrespectable, ridiculous Boswell before he can write a tolerable Life. Thus too, strangely enough, the only Lives worth reading are those of players, emptiest and poorest of the sons of Adam: who nevertheless were sons of his, and brothers of ours; and by the nature of the case had already hidden Respectability good-day. Such bounties, in this as in infinitely deeper matters, does Respectability shower down on us. Sad are thy doings, O *Gig*; sadder than those of Juggernaut's Car: that, with huge wheel, suddenly crushes asunder the bodies of men; thou, in thy light-bobbing Long-acre springs, gradually winnowest away their souls!

Depend upon it, for one thing, good Reader, no age ever seemed the Age of Romance to *itself*. Charlemagne, let the Poets talk as they will, had his own provocations in the world: what with selling of his poultry and pot-herbs, what with wanton daughters carrying secretaries through the snow: and, for instance, that hanging of the Saxons over the Weser-bridge (four thousand of them, they say, at one bout), it seems to me that the Great Charles had his temper ruffled at times. Roland of Roncesvalles too, we see well in thinking of it, found rainy weather as well as sunny; knew what it was to have hose need darning; got tough beef to chew, or even went dinnerless; was saddle-sick, calumniated, constipated (as his madness too clearly indicates); and oftenest felt, I doubt not, that this was a very Devil's world, and he, Roland himself, one of the sorriest caitiffs there. Only in long subsequent days, when the tough beef, the constipation and the calumny had clean vanished, did it all begin to seem Romantic, and your Turpins and Ariostos found music in it. So, I say, is it *ever*! And the more, as your true hero, your true Roland, is ever *unconscious* that he is a hero: this is a condition of all greatness.

In our own poor Nineteenth Century the Writer of these lines has been fortunate enough to see not a few glimpses of Romance; he imagines this Nineteenth is hardly a whit less romantic than that Ninth, or any other, since centuries began. Apart from Napoleon, and the Dantons, and Mirabeaus, whose fire-words of public speaking, and fire-whirlwinds of cannon and musketry, which for a season darkened the air, are *perhaps* at

* FRASER'S MAGAZINE, Nos. 85 and 86.

† 'I always considered him a respectable man.—What do you mean by "respectable"?'—He kept a Gig.—Thurtell's Trial.

minated, and joy can not only dawn but shine; the Necklace, which shall be famous and world-famous, is made.

Made we call it, in conformity with common speech: but properly it was not made; only, with more or less spirit of method, arranged and agglomerated. What spirit of method lay in it, might be made; nothing more. But to tell the various Histories of those various Diamonds, from the first making of them; or even, omitting all the rest, from the first digging of them in the far Indian mines! How they lay, for uncounted ages and æons (under the uproar and splashing of such Deucalion Deluges, and Hutton Explosions, with steam enough, and Werner Submersions), silently embedded in the rock; did nevertheless, when their hour came, emerge from it, and first behold the glorious Sun smile on them, and with their many-coloured glances smiled back on him. How they served next, let us say, as eyes of Heathen Idols, and received worship. How they had then, by fortune of war or theft, been knocked out; and exchanged among camp-sutlers for a little spirituous liquor, and bought by Jews, and worn as signets on the fingers of tawny or white Majesties; and again been lost, with the fingers too, and perhaps life (as by Charles the Rash, among the mud-ditches of Nanci), in old-forgotten glorious victories; and so, through innumerable varieties of fortune,—had come at last to the cutting-wheel of Boehmer; to be united, in strange fellowship, with comrades already blown together from all ends of the Earth, each with a History of its own! Could these aged stones, the youngest of them Six Thousand years of age and upwards, but have spoken, *there* were an Experience for Philosophy to teach by!—But now, as was said, by little caps of gold, and daintiest rings of the same, they are all being, so to speak, enlisted under Boehmer's flag,—made to take rank and file, in new order, no Jewel asking his neighbour whence he came; and parade there for a season. For a season only; and then—to disperse, and enlist anew *ad infinitum*. In such inexplicable wise are Jewels, and Men also, and indeed all earthly things, jumbled together and asunder, and shovelled and wafled to and fro, in our inexplicable chaos of a World. This was what Boehmer called *making* his Necklace.

So, in fact, do other men speak, and with even less reason. How many men, for example, hast thou heard talk of making money; of making, say, a million and a half of money? Of which million and half, how much, if one were to look into it, had they *made*? The accurate value of their Industry; not a sixpence more. Their making, then, was but, like Boehmer's, a clutching and heaping together;—by and by to be followed also by a dispersion. Made? Thou too-vain individual! were these towered ashlar edifices; were these fair bounteous leas, with their bosky umbrages and yellow harvests; and the sunshine that lights them from above, and the granite rocks and fire-reservoirs that support them from below, made by *thee*? I think, by another. The very shilling that thou hast was dug, by man's force, in Carinthia and Paraguay; smelted sufficiently; and stamped, as would seem, not without the advice of our late Defender of the Faith, his Majesty George the Fourth. Thou hast it, and holdest it; but whether, or in what sense, thou hast *made* any farthing of it, thyself canst not say. If the courteous reader ask: What things, then, are made by man? I will answer him: Very few indeed. A Heroism, a Wisdom (a god-given Volition that has realised itself), is made now and then: for example, some five or six Books, since the Creation, have been made. Strange that there are not more: for surely every encouragement is held out. Could I, or thou, happy reader, but make one, the world would let us keep it unstolen for Fourteen whole years,—and take what we could get for it.

But, in a word, Monsieur Boehmer has made his Necklace, what he calls made it: happy man is he. From a Drawing, as large as reality, kindly furnished by 'Taunay, Printseller, of the Rue d'Enfer;'* and again, in late years by the Abbé Georgel,

* Frontispiece of the '*Affaire du Collier*, Paris, 1785;' wherefrom Georgel's editor has copied it. This '*Affaire du Collier*, Paris, 1785,' is not properly a Book; but a bound collection of such Law-Papers (*Mémoires pour*, etc.) as were printed and emitted by the various parties in that famed 'Necklace Trial.' These Law-Papers, bound into Two Volumes quarto; with Portraits, such as the Printshops yielded them at the time; likewise with patches of *Ms.*, containing Notes, Pasquinade.

in the Second Volume of his *Mémoires*, curious readers can still fancy to themselves what a princely Ornament it was. A row of seventeen glorious diamonds, as large almost as filberts, encircle, not too tightly, the neck, a first time. Looser, gracefully fastened thrice to these, a three-wreathed festoon, and pendants enough (simple pear-shaped, multiple star-shaped, or clustering amorphous) encircle it, enwreath it, a second time. Loosest of all, softly flowing round from behind, in priceless catenary, rush down two broad threefold rows; seem to knot themselves, round a very Queen of Diamonds, on the bosom; then rush on, again separated, as if there were length in plenty; the very tassels of them were a fortune for some men. And now lastly, two other inexpressible threefold rows, also with their tassels, will, when the Necklace is on and clasped, unite themselves behind into a doubly inexpressible *six*-fold row; and so stream down, together or asunder, over the hind-neck,—we may fancy, like lambent Zodiacal or Aurora-Borealis fire.

All these on a neck of snow slight-tinged with rose-bloom, and within it royal Life: amidst the blaze of lustres; in sylphish movements, espiègeries, coquetteries, and minute-mazes; with every movement a flash of star-rainbow colours, bright almost as the movements of the fair young soul it emblems! A glorious ornament; fit only for the Sultana of the World. Indeed, only attainable by such; for it is valued at 1,800,000 livres; say, in round numbers, and sterling money, between eighty and ninety thousand pounds.

CHAPTER III.

THE NECKLACE CANNOT BE SOLD.

MISCALCULATING Boehmer! The Sultana of the Earth shall never wear that Necklace of thine; no neck, either royal or vassal, shall ever be the lovelier for it. In the present distressed state of our finances, with the American War raging round us, where thinkest thou are eighty thousand pounds to be raised for such a thing? In this hungry world, thou fool, these five hundred and odd Diamonds, good only for looking at, are intrinsically worth less to us than a string of as many dry Irish potatoes, on which a famishing Sansculotte might fill his belly. Little knowest thou, laughing Joaillier-Bijoutier, great in thy pride of place, in thy pride of *savoir-faire*, what the world has in store for thee. Thou laughest there; by and by thou wilt laugh on the wrong side of thy face mainly.

While the Necklace lay in stucco effigy, and the stones of it were still 'circulating in Commerce,' Du Barry's was the neck it was meant for. Unhappily, as all dogs, male and female, have but their day, her day is done; and now (so busy has Death been) she sits retired, on mere half-pay, without prospects, at

songs, and the like, of the most unspeakable character occasionally,—constitute this '*Affaire du Collier*;' which the Paris Dealers in Old Books can still procure there. It is one of the largest collections of Falsehoods that exists in print; and, unfortunately, still, after all the narrating and history there has been on the subject, forms our chief means of getting at the truth of that Transaction. The First Volume contains some Twenty-one *Mémoires pour*: not, of course, Historical statements of truth; but Culprits' and Lawyers' statements of what they wished to be believed; each party *lying* according to his ability to lie. To reach the truth, or even any honest guess at the truth, the immensities of rubbish must be sifted, contrasted, rejected: what grain of historical evidence may lie at the bottom is then attainable. Thus, as this Transaction of the Diamond Necklace has been called the '*Largest Lie of the Eighteenth Century*,' so it comes to us borne, not unfitly, on a whole illimitable dim Chaos of Lies!

Nay, the Second Volume, entitled *Suite de l'Affaire du Collier*, is still stranger. It relates to the Intrigue and Trial of one Bette d'Etienneville, who represents himself as a poor lad that had been kidnapped, blindfolded, introduced to beautiful Ladies, and engaged to get husbands for them; as setting out on this task, and gradually getting quite bewitched and bewildered;—most indubitably, going on to bewitch and bewilder other people on all hands of him: the whole in *consequence* of this 'Necklace Trial,' and the noise it was making! Very curious. The Lawyers did verily busy themselves with this affair of Bette's; there are scarecrow Portraits given, that stood in the Printshops, and no man can know whether the Originals ever so much as existed. It is like the Dream of a Dream. The human mind stands stupent; ejaculates the wish that such Gulf of Falsehood would close itself,—before general Delirium supervene, and the Speech of Man become mere incredible meaningless jargon, like that of coughs and daws. Even from Bette, however, by assiduous sifting, one gathers a particle of truth here and there.

St.-Cyr. A generous France will buy no more neck-ornaments for her:—O Heaven! the Guillotine-axe is already forging (North, in Swedish Dalecarlia, by sledge hammers and fire; South too, by taxes and *tailles*) that will shear her neck in twain!

But, indeed, what of Du Barry? A foul worm; hatched by royal heat, on foul composts, into a flaunting butterfly; now dis-winged, and again a worm! Are there not Kings' Daughters and Kings' Consorts; is not Decoration the first wish of a female heart,—often also, if such heart is empty, the last? The Portuguese Ambassador is here, and his rigorous Pombal is no longer Minister: there is an Infanta in Portugal, purposing by Heaven's blessing to wed.—Singular! the Portuguese Ambassador, though without fear of Pombal, praises, but will not purchase.

Or why not our own loveliest Marie-Antoinette, once Dauphiness only; now every inch a Queen: what neck in the whole Earth would it beseech better? It is fit only for her.—Alas, Boehmer! King Louis has an eye for diamonds, but he too is without overplus of money: his high Queen herself answers queenlike: 'We have more need of Seventy-fours than of Necklaces.' *Laudatur et atget!*—Not without a qualmish feeling, we apply next to the Queen and King of the Two Sicilies.* In vain, O Boehmer! In crowned heads there is no hope for thee. Not a crowned head of them can spare the eighty thousand pounds. The age of Chivalry is gone, and that of Bankruptcy is come. A dull, deep, presaging movement rocks all thrones: Bankruptcy is beating down the gate, and no Chancellor can longer barricade her out. She will enter; and the shoreless fire-lava of DEMOCRACY is at her back! Well may Kings, a second time, 'sit still with awful eye,' and think of far other things than Necklaces.

Thus for poor Boehmer are the mournfulest days and nights appointed; and this high-promising year (1780, as we laboriously guess and gather) stands blacker than all others in his calendar. In vain shall he, on his sleepless pillow, more and more desperately, revolve the problem; it is a problem of the insoluble sort, a true 'irreducible case of Cardan:' the Diamond Necklace will not sell.

CHAPTER IV.

AFFINITIES: THE TWO FIXED-IDEAS.

NEVERTHELESS a man's little Work lies not isolated, stranded; a whole busy World, a whole native-element of mysterious never-resting Force, environs it; will catch it up; will carry it forward, or else backward: always, infallibly, either as living growth, or at worst as well-rotted manure, the Thing Done will come to use. Often, accordingly, for a man that hath finished any little work, this were the most interesting question: In such a boundless whirl of a world, what hook will it be, and what hooks, that shall catch up this little work of mine; and whirl it also,—through such a dance? A question, we need not say, which, in the simplest of cases, would bring the whole Royal Society to a nonplus.—Good Corsican Letitia! while thou nursest thy little Napoleon, and he answers thy mother-smile with those deep eyes of his, a world-famous French Revolution, with Federations of the *Champ de Mars*, and September Massacres, and Bakers' Customers *en queue*, is getting ready: many a Danton and Desmoulins; prim-visaged, Tartuffe-looking Robespierre, as yet all school-boys; and Marat weeping bitter rheum, as he pounds horse-drugs,—are preparing the fittest arena for him!

Thus too, while poor Boehmer is busy with those Diamonds of his, picking them 'out of Commerce,' and his craftsmen are grinding and setting them; a certain ecclesiastical Coadjutor and Grand Almoner, and prospective Commendator and Cardinal, is in Austria, hunting and giving suppers; for whom mainly it is that Boehmer and his craftsmen so employ themselves. Strange enough, once more! The foolish Jeweller at Paris, making foolish trinkets; the foolish Ambassador at Vienna, making blunders and debaucheries: these Two, all uncommunicating, wide asunder as the Poles, are hourly forging for each other the wonderfulest hook-and-eye; which will hook them together, one day,—into artificial Siamese-Twins, for the astonishment of mankind.

* See *Mémoires de Campan*, ii. 1-26.

Prince Louis de Rohan is one of those select mortals born to honours, as the sparks fly upwards; and, alas, also (as all men are) to troubles no less. Of his genesis and descent much might be said, by the curious in such matters; yet perhaps, if we weigh it well, intrinsically little. He can, by diligence and faith, be traced back some handbreadth or two, some century or two; but after that, merges in the mere 'blood-royal of Brittany;' long, long on this side of the Northern Immigrations, he is not so much as to be sought for;—and leaves the whole space onwards from that, into the bosom of Eternity, a blank, marked only by one point, the Fall of Man! However, and what alone concerns us, his kindred, in these quite recent times, have been much about the Most Christian Majesty; could there pick up what was going. In particular, they have had a turn of some continuance for Cardinalship and Commendatorship. Safest trades these, of the calm, do-nothing sort: in the do-something line, in Generalship, or suchlike (witness poor Cousin Soubise at Rossbach*), they might not fare so well. In any case, the actual Prince Louis, Coadjutor at Strasburg, while his uncle the Cardinal-Archbishop has not yet deceased, and left him his dignities, but only fallen sick, already takes his place on one grandest occasion: he, thrice-happy Coadjutor, receives the fair, young, trembling Dauphiness, Marie-Antoinette, on her first entrance into France; and can there, as Ceremonial Fugleman, with fit bearing and semblance (being a tall man of six-and-thirty), do the needful. Of his other performances up to this date, a refined History had rather say nothing.

In fact, if the tolerating mind will meditate it with any sympathy, what could poor Rohan perform? Performing needs light, needs strength, and a firm clear footing; all of which had been denied him. Nourished, from birth, with the choicest physical spoon-meat, indeed; yet, also, with no better spiritual Doctrine and Evangel of Life than a French Court of Louis the Well-beloved could yield; gifted moreover, and this too was but a new perplexity for him, with shrewdness enough to see through much, with vigour enough to despise much; unhappily, not with vigour enough to spurn it from him, and be for ever enfranchised of it,—he awakes, at man's stature, with man's wild desires, in a World of the merest incoherent Lies and Delirium; himself a nameless Mass of delirious Incoherences,—covered over at most, and held-in a little, by conventional Politesse, and a Cloak of prospective Cardinal's Plush. Are not intrigues, might Rohan say, the industry of this our Universe; nay is not the Universe itself, at bottom, properly an intrigue? A Most Christian Majesty, in the *Parc-aux-cerfs*; he, thou seest, is the god of this lower world; in the fight of Life, our war-banner and celestial *En-tout-nika* is a Strumpet's Petticoat: these are thy gods, O France!—What, in such singular circumstances, could poor Rohan's creed and world-theory be, that he should 'perform' thereby? Atheism? Alas, no; not even Atheism: only Macchiavelism; and the indestructible faith that 'ginger is hot in the mouth.' Get ever new and better *ginger*, therefore; chew it ever the more diligently: 'tis all that thou hast to look to, and that only for a day.

Ginger enough, poor Louis de Rohan: too much of ginger! Whatsoever of it, for the five senses, money, or money's worth, or backstairs diplomacy, can buy; nay for the sixth sense too, the far spicier ginger, Antecedence of thy fellow-creatures,—merited, at least, by infinitely finer housing than theirs. Coadjutor of Strasburg, Archbishop of Strasburg, Grand Almoner of France, Commander of the Order of the Holy Ghost, Cardinal, Commendator of St. Wast d'Arras (one of the fattest benefices here below): all these shall be housings for Monseigneur: to all these shall his Jesuit Nursing-mother, our vulpine Abbé Georgel,

* Here is the Epigram they made against him on occasion of Rossbach,—in that 'Despotism tempered by Epigrams,' which France was then said to be:

Soubise dit, la lanterne à la main,
J'ai beau chercher, où diable est mon Armée?
Elle était là pourtant hier matin:
Me l'a-t-on prise, ou l'aurais-je égarée?—
Que vois-je, ô ciel! que mon âme est ravié!
Prodige heureux! la voilà, la voilà!—
Ah, ventreblen! qu'est-ce donc que cela?
Je me trompais, c'est l'Armée Ennemie!

through fair court-weather and through foul, triumphantly bear him; and wrap him with them, fat, somnolent Nurseling as he is.—By the way, a most assiduous, ever-wakeful Abbé is this Georgel; and wholly Monseigneur's. He has scouts dim-flying, far out, in the great deep of the world's business! has spider-threads that overnet the whole world; himself sits in the centre, ready to run. In vain shall King and Queen combine against Monseigneur: 'I was at M. de Maurepas's pillow before six,'—persuasively wagging my sleek coif, and the sleek reynard-head under it; I managed it all for him. Here too, on occasion of Reynard Georgel, we could not but reflect what a singular species of creature your Jesuit must have been. Outwardly, you would say, a man; the smooth semblance of a man: inwardly, to the centre, filled with stone! Yet in all breathing things, even in stone Jesuits, are inscrutable sympathies: how else does a Reynard Abbé so loyally give himself, soul and body, to a somnolent Monseigneur;—how else does the poor Tit, to the neglect of its own eggs and interests, nurse-up a huge lumbering Cuckoo; and think its pains all paid, if the soot-brown Stupidity will merely grow bigger and bigger!—Enough by Jesuitic or other means, Prince Louis de Rohan shall be passively kneaded and baked into Commendator of St. Wast and much else; and truly such a Commendator as hardly, since King Thiéri, first of the *Fainéans*, founded that Establishment, has played his part there.

Such, however, have Nature and Art combined together to make Prince Louis. A figure thrice-clothed with honours; with plush, and civic and ecclesiastic garniture of all kinds; but in itself little other than an amorphous congeries of contradictions, somnolence and violence, foul passions and foul habits. It is by his plush cloaks and wrappings mainly, as above hinted, that such a figure sticks together; what we call 'coheres,' in any measure; were it not for these, he would flow out boundlessly on all sides. Conceive him farther, with a kind of radical vigour and fire, for he can see clearly at times, and speak fiercely; yet left in this way to stagnate and ferment, and lie overlaid with such floods of fat material: have we not a true image of the shamefulest Mud-volcano, gurgling and sluttishly simmering, amid continual steamy indistinctness,—except, as was hinted, in wind-gusts; with occasional terrifico-absurd mud-explosions!

This, garnish it and fringe it never so handsomely, is, alas, the intrinsic character of Prince Louis. A shameful spectacle: such, however, as the world has beheld many times; as it were to be wished, but is not yet to be hoped, the world might behold no more. Nay, are not all possible delirious incoherences, outward and inward, summed up, for poor Rohan, in this one incredible incoherence, that *he*, Prince Louis de Rohan, is named Priest, Cardinal of the Church? A debauched, merely libidinous mortal, lying there quite helpless, *dissolute* (as we well say); whom to see Church Cardinal, symbolical *Hinge* or main Corner of the Invisible Holy in this World, an Inhabitant of Saturn might split with laughing,—if he did not rather swoon with pity and horror!

Prince Louis, as ceremonial fugleman at Strasburg, might have hoped to make some way with the fair young Dauphiness; but seems not to have made any. Perhaps, in those great days, so trying for a fifteen-years Bride and Dauphiness, the fair Antoinette was too preoccupied; perhaps, in the very face and looks of Prospective-Cardinal Prince Louis, her fair young soul read, all unconsciously, an incoherent *Roué*-ism, bottomless Mud-volcanoism; from which she by instinct rather recoiled.

However, as above hinted, he is now gone, in these years, on Embassy to Vienna: with 'four-and-twenty pages' (if our remembrance of Abbé Georgel serve) 'of noble birth,' all in scarlet breeches; and such a retinue and parade as drowns even his fat revenue in perennial debt. Above all things, his Jesuit Familiar is with him. For so everywhere they must manage: Eminence Rohan is the cloak, Jesuit Georgel the man or automaton within it. Rohan, indeed, sees Poland a-partitioning; or rather Georgel, with his 'masked Austrian' traitor 'on the ramparts,' sees it for him: but what can he do? He exhibits his four-and-twenty scarlet pages,—who, we find, 'smuggle' to quite unconscionable lengths; rides through a Catholic procession, Prospective-Cardinal though he be, because it is too long and keeps him from an appointment; hunts, gallants; gives suppers, Sardanapalus-wise, the

finest ever seen in Vienna. Abbé Georgel, as we fancy it was, writes a Despatch in his name 'every fortnight';—mentions in one of these, that 'Maria Theresa stands, indeed, with the handkerchief in one hand, weeping for the woes of Poland; but with the sword in the other hand, ready to cut Poland in sections, and take her share.*' Untimely joke; which proved to Prince Louis the root of unspeakable chagrins? For Minister D'Aiguillon (much against his duty) communicates the Letter to King Louis; Louis to Du Barry, to season her *souper*, and laughs over it; the thing becomes a court-joke; the filially pious Dauphiness hears it, and remembers it. Accounts go, moreover, that Rohan spake censuringly of the Dauphiness to her Mother: this probably is but hearsay and false; the devout Maria Theresa disliked him, and even despised him, and vigorously laboured for his recall.

Thus, in rosy sleep and somnambulism, or awake only to quaff the full wine-cup of the Scarlet Woman his Mother, and again sleep and somnambulate, does the Prospective-Cardinal and Commendator pass his days. Unhappy man! This is not a world which was made in sleep; which it is safe to sleep and somnambulate in. In that 'loud-roaring Loom of Time' (where above nine hundred millions of hungry Men, for one item, restlessly weave and work), so many threads fly humming from their 'eternal spindles'; and swift invisible shuttles, far darting, to the Ends of the World,—complex enough! At this hour, a miserable Boehmer in Paris, whom thou wottest not of, is spinning, of diamonds and gold, a paltry thrum that will go nigh to strangle the life out of thee.

Meanwhile Louis the Well-beloved has left, forever, his *Parc-aux-cerfs*; and, amid the scarce-suppressed hootings of the world, taken up his last lodging at St. Denis. Feeling that it was all over (for the smallpox has the victory, and even Du Barry is off), he, as the Abbé Georgel records, 'made the *amende honorable* to God' (these are his Reverence's own words); had a true repentance of three-days standing; and so, continues the Abbé, 'fell asleep in the Lord.' Asleep in the Lord, Monsieur l'Abbé! If such a mass of Laziness and Lust fell asleep in the Lord, *who*, fanciest thou, is it that falls asleep—elsewhere! Enough that he did fall asleep; that thick-wrapt in the Blanket of the Night, under what keeping we ask not, *he* never through endless Time can, for his own or our sins, insult the face of the Sun any more;—and so now we go onward, if not to less degrees of beastliness, yet at least and worst, to cheering varieties of it.

Louis XVI therefore reigns (and, under the Sieur Gamain, makes locks); his fair Dauphiness has become a Queen. Eminence Rohan is home from Vienna; to condole and congratulate. He bears a letter from Maria Theresa; hopes the Queen will not forget old Ceremonial Fuglemen, and friends of the Dauphiness. Heaven and Earth! The Dauphiness Queen will not see him; orders the Letter to be *sent* her. The King himself signifies briefly that he 'will be asked for when wanted'!

Alas! at Court, our motion is the delicatest, unsurest. We go spinning, as it were, on teetotums, by the edges of bottomless deeps. Rest is fall; so is one false whirl. A moment ago, Eminence Rohan seemed waltzing with the best: but, behold, his teetotum has *carried him over*; there is an inversion of the centre of gravity; and so now, heels uppermost, velocity increasing as the time, space as the square of the time,—he rushes.

On a man of poor Rohan's somnolence and violence, the sympathising mind can estimate what the effect was. Consternation, stupefaction, the total jumble of blood, brains, and nervous spirits; in ear and heart, only universal hubbub, and louder and louder singing of the agitated air. A fall comparable to that of Satan! Men have, indeed, been driven from Court; and borne it, according to ability. Choiseul, in these very years, retired

* *Mémoires de l'Abbé Georgel*, ii. 1-220. Abbé Georgel, who has given, in the place referred to, a long solemn Narrative of the Necklace Business, passes for the grand authority on it; but neither will he, strictly taken up, abide scrutiny. He is vague as may be; writing in what is called the 'scaped-pig' fashion: yet sometimes you do catch him, and hold him. There are hardly above three dates in his whole Narrative. He mistakes several times; perhaps, once or twice, wilfully misrepresents a little. The main incident of the business is misdated by him, almost a twelvemonth. It is to be remembered that the poor Abbé wrote in exile; and with cause enough for prepossessions and hostilities.

Parthianlike, with a smile or scowl; and drew half the Court-host along with him. Our Wolsey, though once an *Ego et Rex meus*, could journey, it is said, without strait-waistcoat, to his monastery; and there telling beads, look forward to a still longer journey. The melodious, too soft-strung Racine, when his King turned his back on him, emitted one meek wail, and submissively—died. But the case of Coadjutor de Rohan differed from all these. No loyalty was in him, that he should die; no self-help, that he should live; no faith, that he should tell beads. His is a mud-volcanic character; incoherent, mad, from the very foundation of it. Think too, that his Courtiership (for how could any nobleness enter there!) was properly a gambling speculation: the loss of his trump Queen of Hearts can bring nothing but flat unredeemed despair. No other game has he, in this world,—or in the next. And then the exasperating *Why?* The *How* came it? For that Rohanic, or Georgelic, sprightliness of the 'handkerchief in one hand, and sword in the other,' if indeed that could have caused it all, has quite escaped him. In the name of Friar Bacon's Head, what was it? Imagination, with Desperation to drive her, may fly to all points of Space;—and returns with wearied wings, and no tidings. Behold me here: this, which is the first grand certainty for man in general, is the first and last and only one for poor Rohan. And then his *Hers!* Alas, looking upwards, he can eye, from his burning marl, the azure realms, once his; and Cousin Countess de Marsan, and so many Richelieus, Polignacs, and other happy angels, male and female, all blissfully gyrating there; while he—!

Nevertheless hope, in the human breast, though not in the diabolic, springs eternal. The outcast Rohan bends all his thoughts, faculties, prayers, purposes, to one object; one object he will attain, or go to Bedlam. How many ways he tries; what days and nights of conjecture, consultation; what written unpublished reams of correspondence, protestation, backstairs diplomacy of every rubric! How many suppers has he eaten; how many given,—in vain! It is his morning song, and his evening prayer. From innumerable falls he rises; only to fall again. Behold him even, with his red stockings, at dusk, in the Garden of Trianon; he has bribed the Concierge; will see her Majesty in spite of Etiquette and Fate; peradventure, pitying his long sad King's-evil, she will touch him and heal him. In vain,—says the Female Historian, Campan.* The Chariot of Majesty shoots rapidly by, with high-plumed heads in it; Eminence is known by his red stockings, but not looked at, only laughed at, and left standing like a Pillar of Salt.

Thus through ten long years, of new resolve and new despondency, of flying from Saverne to Paris, and from Paris to Saverne, has it lasted; hope deferred making the heart sick. Reynard Georgel and Cousin de Marsan, by eloquence, by influence, and being 'at M. de Maurepas's pillow before six,' have secured the Archbishopric, the Grand-Almonership; the Cardinalship (by the medium of Poland); and lastly, to tinker many rents, and appease the Jews, that fattest Commendatorship, founded by King Thierry the Do-nothing—perhaps with a view to such cases. All good; languidly croaks Rohan; yet all not the one thing needful; alas, the Queen's eyes do not yet shine on me.

Abbé Georgel admits, in his own polite diplomatic way, that the Mud-volcano was much agitated by these trials; and in time quite changed. Monseigneur deviated into cabalistic courses, after elixirs, philtres, and the philosopher's stone; that is, the volcanic steam grew thicker and heavier: at last by Cagliostro's magic (for Cagliostro and the Cardinal by elective affinity must meet), it sank into the opacity of perfect London fog! So too, if Monseigneur grew choleric; wrapped himself up in reserve, spoke roughly to his domestics and dependents,—were not the terrifico-absurd mud-explosions becoming more frequent? Alas, what wonder? Some nine-and-forty winters have now fled over his Eminence (for it is 1783), and his beard falls white to the shaver; but age for him brings no 'benefit of experience.' He is possessed by a fixed-idea!

* Madame Campan, in her Narrative, and indeed in her *Memoirs* generally, does not seem to intend falsehood: this, in the Business of the Necklace, is saying a great deal. She rather, perhaps, intends the producing of an impression; which may have appeared to herself to be the right one. But, at all events, she has, here or elsewhere, no notion of historical rigour; she gives hardly any date, or the like; will tell the same thing, in different places, different ways, etc. There is a tradition that Louis XVIII. revised her *Memoirs* before publication. She requires to be read with scepticism everywhere; but yields something in that way.

Foolish Eminence! is the Earth grown all barren and of a snuff colour, because one pair of eyes in it look on thee askance! Surely thou hast Thy body there yet; and what of soul might from the first reside in it. Nay, a warm, snug Body, with not only five senses (sound still, in spite of much tear and wear), but most eminent clothing, besides;—clothed with authority over much, with red Cardinal's cloak, red Cardinal's hat; with Commendatorship, Grand-Almonership, so kind have thy Friepriens been; with dignities and dominions too tedious to name. The stars rise nightly, with tidings (for thee, too, if thou wilt listen) from the infinite Blue; Sun and Moon bring vicissitudes of season; dressing green, with flower-borderings, and cloth of gold, this ancient ever-young Earth of ours, and filling her breasts with all-nourishing mother's milk. Wilt thou work? The whole Encyclopedia (not Diderot's only, but the Almighty's) is there for thee to spread thy broad faculty upon. Or, if thou have no faculty, no Sense, hast thou not, as already suggested, Senses, to the number of five? What victuals thou wishest, command; with what wine savoureth thee, be filled. Already thou art a false lascivious Priest; with revenues of, say, a quarter of a million sterling; and no mind to mend. Eat, foolish Eminence; eat with voracity,—leaving the shot till afterwards! In all this the eyes of Marie-Antoinette can neither help thee nor hinder.

And yet what is the Cardinal, dissolute mud-volcano though he be, more foolish herein than all Sons of Adam? Give the wisest of us once a 'fixed-idea,'—which, though a temporary madness, who has not had?—and see where his wisdom is! The Chamois-hunter serves his doomed seven years in the Quicksilver Mines; returns salivated to the marrow of the backbone; and next morning—goes forth to hunt again. Behold Cardinal King of Urinals; with a woful ballad to his mistress' eyebrow! He blows out, Werter-wise, his foolish existence, because she will not have it to keep;—heeds not that there are some five hundred millions of other mistresses in this noble Planet; most likely much such as she. O foolish men! They sell their Inheritance (as their Mother did hers), though it is Paradise, for a crotchet: will they not, in every age, dare not only grape-shot and gallows-ropes, but Hell-fire itself, for better sauce to their victuals? My friends, beware of fixed-ideas.

Here, accordingly, is poor Boehmer with one in his head too! He has been hawking his 'irreducible case of Cardan,' that Necklace of his, these three long years, through all Palaces and Ambassadors' Hotels, over the old 'nine Kingdoms,' or more of them than there now are: searching, sifting Earth, Sea and Air, for a customer. To take his Necklace in pieces; and so, losing only his manual labour and expected glory, dissolve his fixed-idea, and fixed diamonds, into current ones: this were simply casting out the Devil—from himself; a miracle, and perhaps more! For he too has a Devil, or Devils: one mad object which he strives at; which he too will attain, or go to Bedlam. Creditors, snarling, hound him on from without; mocked Hopes, lost Labours, bear-bait him from within: to these torments his fixed-idea keeps him chained. In six-and-thirty weary revolutions of the Moon, was it wonderful the man's brain had got dried a little?

Behold, one day, being Court-Jeweller, he too bursts, almost as Rohan had done, into the Queen's retirement, or apartment; flings himself (as Campan again has recorded) at her Majesty's feet; and there, with clasped uplifted hands, in passionate nasal-gutturals, with streaming tears and loud sobs, entreats her to do one of two things: Either to buy his Necklace: or else graciously to vouchsafe him her royal permission to drown himself in the River Seine. Her Majesty, pitying the distracted bewildered state of the man, calmly points out the plain third course: *Dépêchez votre Collier*, Take your Necklace in pieces;—adding withal, in a tone of queenly rebuke, that if he would drown himself, he at all times could, without her furtherance.

Ah, had he drowned himself, with the Necklace in his pocket; and Cardinal Commendator at his skirts! Kings, above all, beautiful Queens, as far-radiant Symbols on the pinnacles of the world, are so exposed to madmen. Should these two fixed-ideas that beset this beautiful Queen, and almost burst through her Palace-walls, one day unite, and this not to jump into the River Seine;—what maddest result may be looked for!

CHAPTER V.

THE ARTIST.

If the reader has hitherto, in our too figurative language, seen only the figurative hook and the figurative eye, which Boehmer and Rohan, far apart, were respectively fashioning for each other, he shall now see the cunning Milliner (an actual, unmetaphorical *Milliner*) by whom these two individuals, with their two implements, are brought in contact, and hooked together into stupendous artificial Siamese-Twins;—after which the whole nodus and solution will naturally combine and unfold itself.

Jeanne de Saint-Remi, by courtesy or otherwise, Countess, styled also of *Valois*, and even of *France*, has now, in this year of Grace 1783, known the world for some seven-and-twenty summers; and had crooks in her lot. She boasts herself descended, by what is called *natural* generation, from the Blood-Royal of France: Henri Second, before that fatal tourney-lance entered his right eye and ended him, appears to have had, successively or simultaneously, four—unmentionable women: and so, *in vice* of the third of these, came a certain Henri de Saint-Remi into this world; and, as High and Puissant Lord, ate his victuals and spent his days, on an allotted domain of Fontette, near Bar-sur-Aube, in Champagne. Of High and Puissant Lords, at this Fontette, six other generations followed; and thus ultimately, in a space of some two centuries,—succeeded in realising this brisk little Jeanne de Saint-Remi, here in question. But, ah, what a falling-off! The Royal Family of France has wellnigh forgotten its left-hand collaterals: the last High and Puissant Lord (much clipt by his predecessors), falling into drink, and left by a scandalous world to drink his pitcher *dry*, had to alienate by degrees his whole worldly Possessions, down almost to the indispensable, or inexpressibles; and die at last in the Paris Hôtel-Dieu; glad that it was not on the street. So that he has, indeed, given a sort of bastard royal life to little Jeanne, and her little brother; but not the smallest earthly provender to keep it in. The mother, in her extremity, forms the wonderfulest connections; and little Jeanne, and her little brother, go out into the highways to beg.*

A charitable Countess Boulainvilliers, struck with the little bright-eyed tatterdemalion from the carriage-window, picks her up; has her scoured, clothed; and rears her, in her fluctuating miscellaneous way, to be, about the age of twenty, a nondescript of Mantuamaker, Soubrette, Court-beggar, Fine-lady, Abigail, and Scion-of-Royalty. Sad combination of trades! The Court, after infinite soliciting, puts one off with a hungry dole of little more than thirty pounds a-year. Nay, the audacious Count Boulainvilliers dares, with what purpose he knows best, to offer some suspicious presents!† Whereupon his good Countess, especially as Mantuamaking languishes, thinks it could not but be fit to go down to Bar-sur-Aube; and there see whether no fractions of that alienated Fontette Property, held perhaps on insecure tenure, may, by terror or cunning, be recoverable. Burning her paper patterns, pocketing her pension till more come, Mademoiselle Jeanne sallies out thither, in her twenty-third year.

Nourished in this singular way, alternating between saloon and kitchen-table, with the loftiest of pretensions, meanest of possessions, our poor High and Puissant Mantuamaker has realised for herself a 'face not beautiful, yet with a certain piquancy;' dark hair, blue eyes; and a character which the present Writer, a determined student of human nature, declares to be undecipherable. Let the Psychologists try it! Jeanne de Saint-Remi de Valois de France actually lived, and worked, and was: she has even published, at various times, three considerable Volumes of Autobiography, with loose Leaves (in Courts of Justice) of unknown number;‡ wherein he that runs may

* *Vie de Jeanne Comtesse de Lamotte* (by Herself), vol. i.

† He was of Hebrew descent: grandson of the renowned Jew Bernard, whom Louis XV., and even Louis XIV., used to 'walk with in the Royal Garden,' when they wanted him to lend them money. See *Souvenirs du Duc de Levis; Mémoires de Ducloux*, etc.

‡ Four *Mémoires pour* by her, in this *Affaire du Collier*; like 'Lawyers' tongues turned inside out'! Afterwards One Volume, *Mémoires Justificatifs de la Comtesse de*, etc. (London, 1788); with Appendix of 'Documents' so-called. This has also been translated into a kind of English. Then Two Volumes, as quoted above: *Vie de Jeanne de*, etc.; printed in London,

read,—but not understand. Strange Volumes! more like the screeching of distracted night-birds (suddenly disturbed by the torch of Police-Fowlers), than the articulate utterance of a rational unfeathered biped. Cheerfully admitting these statements to be all lies; we ask: How any mortal could, or should, so lie?

The Psychologists, however, commit one sore mistake; that of searching, in every character named human, for something like a conscience. Being mere contemplative recluses, for most part, and feeling that Morality is the heart of Life, they judge that with all the world it is so. Nevertheless, as practical men are aware, Life can go on in excellent vigour without crotchet of that kind. What is the essence of Life? Volition? Go deeper down, you find a much more universal root and characteristic: Digestion. While Digestion lasts, Life cannot, in philosophical language, be said to be extinct: and Digestion will give rise to Volitions enough; at any rate, to Desires and attempts which may pass for such. He who looks neither before nor after, any farther than the Larder and Stateroom, which latter is properly the finest compartment of the Larder, will need no World-theory, Creed as it is called, or Scheme of Duties: lightly leaving the world to wag as it likes with any theory or none, his grand object is a theory and practice of ways and means. Not goodness or badness is the type of him; only shiftiness or shiftlessness.

And now, disburdened of this obstruction, let the Psychologists consider it under a bolder view. Consider the brisk Jeanne de Saint-Remi de Saint-Shifty as a Spark of vehement Life, not developed into Will of any kind, yet fully into Desires of all kinds and cast into such a Life-element as we have seen. Vanity and Hunger; a Princess of the Blood, yet whose father has sold his inexpressibles; uncertain whether fosterdaughter of a fond Countess, with hopes sky-high, or supernumerary Soubrette; with not enough of mantuamaking: in a word, *Gigmanity disigged*; one of the saddest, pitiable, unpitied predicaments of man! She is of that light unreflecting class, of that light unreflecting sex: *varium semper et mutabile*. And then her Fine-ladyism, though a purseless one: capricious, coquettish, and with all the finer sensibilities of the heart; now in the rackets, now in the sullens; vivid in contradictory resolves; laughing, weeping without reason,—though these acts are said to be signs of reason. Consider too, how she has had to work her way, all along, by flattery and cajolery; wheedling, eaves-dropping, namby-pambying: how she needs wages, and knows no other productive trades. Thought can hardly be said to exist in her: only Perception and Device. With an understanding lynx-eyed for the surface of things, but which pierces beyond the surface of nothing; every individual thing (for she has never seized the heart of it) turns up a new face to her every new day, and seems a thing changed, a different thing. Thus sits, or rather vehemently bobs and hovers, her vehement mind, in the middle of a boundless many-dancing whirlpool of gilt-shreds, paper-clippings, and windfalls,—to which the revolving chaos of my Uncle Toby's Smoke-jack was solidity and regularity. Reader! thou for thy sins must have met with such fair Irrationals; fascinating, with their lively eyes, with their quick snappish fancies; distinguished in the higher circles, in Fashion, even in Literature: they hum and buzz there, on graceful film-wings;—searching nevertheless with the wonderfulest skill for honey; 'untamable as flies'!

Wonderfulest skill for honey, we say; and, pray, mark that, as regards this Countess de Saint-Shifty. Her instinct-of-genius is prodigious; her appetite fierce. In any foraging speculation of the private kind, she, unthinking as you call her, will be worth a hundred thinkers. And so of such untamable flies the untamablest, Mademoiselle Jeanne, is now buzzing down, in the Bar-sur-Aube Diligence; to inspect the honey-jars of Fontette; and see and smell whether there be any flaws in them.

—by way of extorting money from Paris. This latter Lying Autobiography of Lamotte was bought-up by French persons in authority. It was the burning of this *Editio Princeps* in the Sèvres Potteries, on the 30th of May, 1792, which raised such a smoke that the Legislative Assembly took alarm; and had an investigation about it, and considerable examining of Potters, etc., till the truth came out. Copies of the book were speedily reprinted after the Tenth of August. It is in English too; and, except in the Necklace part, is not so entirely distracted as the former.

Alas, at Fontette, we can, with sensibility, behold strawroofs we were nursed under! farmers courteously offer cooked milk, and other country messes: but no soul will part with his Landed Property, for which, though cheap, he declares hard money was paid. The honey-jars are all close, then?—However, a certain Monsieur de Lamotte, a tall Gendarme, home on furlough from Lunéville, is now at Bar; pays us attentions; becomes quite particular in his attentions,—for we have a face 'with a certain piquancy,' the liveliest glib-snappish tongue, the liveliest kittenish manner (not yet hardened into *cat-hood*), with thirty pounds a-year and prospects. M. de Lamotte, indeed, is as yet only a private sentinel; but then a private sentinel in the *Gendarmes*: and did not his father die fighting 'at the head of his company,' at Minden? Why not in virtue of our own Countess-ship dub him too Count; by left-hand collateralism, get him advanced?—Finished before the furlough is done! The untamablest of flies has again buzzed off; in wedlock with M. de Lamotte; if not to get honey, yet to escape spiders; and so lies in garrison at Lunéville, amid coquetries and hysterics, in Gigmanity disfigged,—disconsolate enough.

At the end of four long years (too long), M. de Lamotte, or call him now *Count de Lamotte*, sees good to lay down his fighting-gear (unhappily still only the musket), and become what is by certain moderns called 'a Civilian': not a Civil-law Doctor; merely a Citizen, one who does not live by being killed. Alas, cold eclipse has all along hung over the Lamotte household. Countess Boulainvilliers, it is true, writes in the most feeling manner; but then the Royal Finances are so deranged! Without personal pressing solicitation, on the spot, no Court-solicitor, were his Pension the meagrest, can hope to better it. At Lunéville the sun, indeed, shines; and there is a kind of Life; but only an Un-Parisian, half or quarter Life; the very tradesmen grow clamorous, and no cunningly-devised fable, ready-money alone will appease them. Commandant Marquis d'Autichamp* agrees with Madame Boulainvilliers that a journey to Paris were the project whither, also, he himself is just going. Perfidious Commandant Marquis! His plan is seen through: he dares to presume to make love to a Scion-of-Royalty; or to hint that he could dare to presume to do it! Whereupon, indignant Count de Lamotte, as we said, throws up his commission, and down his firearms, without further delay. The King loses a tall private sentinel; the World has a new blackleg: and Monsieur and Madame de Lamotte take places in the Diligence for Strasburg.

Good Foster-mother Boulainvilliers, however, is no longer at Strasburg: she is forward at the Archbishop's Palace in Saverne; on a visit there, to his Eminence Cardinal Commendator, Grand-Almoner Archbishop Prince Louis de Rohan! Thus, then, has Destiny at last brought it about. Thus, after long wanderings, on paths so far separate, has the time come, in this late year 1783, when, of all the nine hundred millions of the Earth's denizens, these preappointed Two behold each other!

The foolish Cardinal, since no sublunary means, not even bribing of the Trianon Concierge, will serve, has taken to the superlunary: he is here, with his fixed-idea and volcanic vapoury darkening, under Cagliostro's management, into thicker and thicker opaque,—of the Black-Art itself. To the glance of hungry genius, Cardinal and Cagliostro could not but have meaning. A flush of astonishment, a sigh over boundless wealth (for the mountains of debt lie invisible) in the hands of boundless Stupidity; some vague looming of indefinite hope: all this one can well fancy. But, alas, what, to a high plush Cardinal, is a now insolvent Scion-of-Royalty,—though with a face of some piquancy? The good Foster-mother's visit, in any case, can last but three days; then, amid old namby-pambyings, with effusions of the nobler sensibilities and tears of pity at least for oneself, Countess de Lamotte, and husband must off with her to Paris, and new possibilities at Court. Only when the sky again darkens, can this vague looming from Saverne look out, by fits, as a cheering weather-sign.

* He is the same Marquis d'Autichamp who was to 'relieve Lyons,' and raise the Siege of Lyons, in Autumn, 1793, but could not do it.

CHAPTER VI.

WILL THE TWO FIXED-IDEAS UNITE?

HOWEVER, the sky, according to custom, is not long in darkening again. The King's finances, we repeat, are in so distracted a state! No D'Ormesson, no Joly de Fleury, wearied with milking the already dry, will increase that scandalous Thirty Pounds of a Scion-of-Royalty by a single doit. Calonne himself, who has a willing ear and encouraging word for all mortals whatsoever, only with difficulty, and by aid of Madame of France,* raises it to some still miserable Sixty-five. Worst of all, the good Foster-mother Boulainvilliers, in few months, suddenly dies: the wretched widower, sitting there, with his white handkerchief, to receive condolences, with closed shutters, mortuary tapestries, and sepulchral cressets burning (which, however, the instant the condolences are gone, he blows out, to save oil), has the audacity again, amid crocodile tears, to—drop hints!† Nay more, he, wretched man in all senses, abridges the Lamotte table; will besiege virtue both in the positive and negative way. The Lamottes, wintry as the world looks, cannot be gone too soon.

As to Lamotte the husband, he, for shelter against much, decisively dives down to the 'subterranean shades of Rascaldom'; gambles, swindles; can hope to live, miscellaneously, if not by the Grace of God, yet by the Oversight of the Devil,—for a time. Lamotte the wife also makes her packages: and waving the un-seductive Count Boulainvilliers Save-all a disdainful farewell, removes to the *Belle Image* in Versailles; there within wind of Court, in attic apartments, on poor water-gruel board, resolves to await what can betide. So much, in a few months of this fateful year 1783, has come and gone.

Poor Jeanne de Saint-Remi de Lamotte Valois, Ex-Mantua-maker, Scion-of-Royalty! What eye, looking into those bare attic apartments and water-gruel platters of the *Belle Image*, but must, in spite of itself, grow dim with almost a kind of tear for thee! There thou art, with thy quick lively glances, face of a certain piquancy, thy gossamer untamable character, snappish sallies, glib all-managing tongue; thy whole incarnated, garmented and so sharply appetent 'spark of Life;' cast down alive into this World, without vote of thine (for the Elective Franchises have not yet got that length); and wouldst so fain live there. Paying scot-and-lot; providing, or fresh-scouring silk court-dresses; 'always keeping a gig!' Thou must hawk and shark to and fro, from anteroom to anteroom; become a kind of terror to all men in place, and women that influence such; dance not light Ionic measures, but attendance merely; have weepings, thanksgiving effusions, aulic, almost forensic, eloquence: perhaps eke-out thy thin livelihood by some coquetries, in the small way;—and so, most poverty-stricken, cold-blighted, yet with young keen blood struggling against it, spin forward thy unequal feeble thread, which the Atropos-scissors will soon clip!

Surely now, if ever, were that vague looming from Saverne welcome, as a weather-sign. How doubly welcome is his plush Eminence's personal arrival!—for with the earliest spring he has come in person, as he periodically does; vaporific, driven by his fixed-idea.

Genius, of the mechanical-practical kind, what is it but a bringing together of two Forces that fit each other, that will give birth to a third? Ever, from Tubalcain's time, Iron lay ready hammered; Water, also, was boiling and bursting: nevertheless, for want of a genius, there was as yet no Steam-engine. In his Eminence Prince Louis, in that huge, restless, incoherent Being of his, depend on it, brave Countess, there are Forces deep, manifold; nay, a fixed-idea concentrates the whole huge Incoherence as it were into one Force: cannot the eye of genius discover its fellow?

Communing much with the Court *valetaille*, our brave Countess has more than once heard talk of Boehmer, of his Necklace, and threatened death by water; in the course of gossiping and tattling, this topic from time to time emerges; is commented upon with empty laughter,—as if there lay no farther

* See Campan.

† *Vie de Jeanne de Lamotte, etc. écrite par elle-même, vol. 1.*

meaning in it. To the common eye there is indeed none: but to the eye of genius? In some moment of inspiration, the question rises on our brave Lamotte: Were not *this*, of all extant Forces, the cognate one that would unite with Eminence Rohan's? Great moment, light-beaming, fire-flashing; like birth of Minerva; like all moments of Creation! Fancy how pulse and breath flutter, almost stop, in the greatness: the great not Divine Idea, the great Diabolic Idea, is too big for her.—Thought (how often must we repeat it?) rules the world. Fire and, in a less degree, Frost; Earth and Sea (for what is your swiftest ship, or steamship, but a *Thought*—embodied in wood?); Reformed Parliaments, rise and ruin of Nations,—sale of Diamonds: all things obey Thought. Countess de Saint-Remi de Lamotte, by power of Thought, is now a made woman. With force of genius she represses, crushes deep down, her Undivine Idea; bends all her faculty to realise it. Prepare thyself, Reader, for a series of the most surprising Dramatic Representations ever exhibited on any stage.

We hear tell of Dramatists, and scenic illusion how 'natural,' how illusive it was: if the spectator, for some half-moment, can half-deceive himself into the belief that it was real, he departs doubly content. With all which, and much more of the like, I have no quarrel. But what must be thought of the Female Dramatist who, for eighteen long months, can exhibit the beautifullest Fata-morgana to a plush Cardinal, wide awake, with fifty years on his head; and so lap him in her scenic illusion that he never doubts but it is all firm earth, and the pasteboard Coullisse-trees are producing Hesperides apples? Could Madame de Lamotte, then, have written a *Hamlet*? I conjecture, not. More goes to the writing of a *Hamlet* than completest 'imitation' of all characters and things in this Earth; there goes, before and beyond all, the rarest *understanding* of these, insight into their hidden essences and harmonies. Erasmus's Ape, as is known in Literary History, sat by while its Master was shaving, and 'imitated' every point of the process; but its own foolish beard grew never the smoother.

As in looking at a finished Drama, it were nowise meet that the spectator first of all got behind the scenes, and saw the burnt-corks, brayed-resin, thunder-barrels, and withered hunger-bitten men and women, of which such heroic work was made: so here with the reader. A peep into the side-scenes shall be granted him, from time to time. But, on the whole, repress, O reader, that too insatiable scientific curiosity of thine; let thy *aesthetic* feeling first have play; and witness what a Prospero's-grotto poor Eminence Rohan is led into, to be pleased he knows not why.

Survey first what we might call the stage-lights, orchestra, general structure of the theatre, mood and condition of the audience. The theatre is the World, with its restless business and madness; near at hand rise the royal Domes of Versailles, mystery around them, and as background the memory of a thousand years. By the side of the River Seine walks, haggard, wasted, a Joaillier-Bijoutier de la Reine, with Necklace in his pocket. The audience is a drunk Christopher Sly in the fittest humour. A fixed-idea, driving him headlong over steep places, like that of the Gadarenes' Swine, has produced a deceptibility, as of desperation, that will clutch at straws. Understand one other word: Cagliostro is prophesying to him! The Quack of Quacks has now for years had him in leading. Transmitting 'predictions in cipher;' questioning, before Hieroglyphic Screens, Columbs in a state of innocence, for elixirs of life, and philosopher's stone; unveiling, in fuliginous clear-obscure, an imaginary majesty of Nature; he isolates him more and more from all unpossessed men. Was it not enough that poor Rohan had become a dissolute, somnolent-violent, ever-vapoury Mud-volcano; but black Egyptian magic must be laid on him!

If perhaps, too, our Countess de Lamotte, with her blandishments—? For though not beautiful, she 'has a certain piquancy' *et cetera!*—Enough, his poor Eminence sits in the fittest place, in the fittest mood: a newly-awakened Christopher Sly; and with his 'small ale' too beside him. Touch, only, the lights with fretipt rod; and let the orchestra, soft-warbling, strike up their fara-lara fiddle-diddle-dee!

CHAPTER VII.

MARIE-ANTOINETTE.

SUCH a soft-warbling fara-lara was it to his Eminence, when, in early January of the year 1784, our Countess first, mysteriously, and under seal of sworn secrecy, hinted to him that, with her winning tongue and great talent as Anecdotic Historian, she had worked a passage to the ear of Queen's Majesty itself.* Gods! dost thou bring with thee airs from Heaven? Is thy face yet radiant with some reflex of that Brightness beyond bright?—Men with fixed-idea are not as other men. To listen to a plain varnished tale, such as your Dramatist can fashion; to ponder the words; to snuff them up, as Ephraim did the east wind, and grow flutulent and drunk with them; what else could poor Eminence do? His poor somnolent, so swift-rocked soul feels a new element infused into it; turbid resinous light, wide-coruscating, glares over the waste of his imagination. Is he interested in the mysterious tidings? Hope has seized them; there is in the world nothing else that interests him.

The secret friendship of Queens is not a thing to be let sleep; ever new Palace Interviews occur;—yet in deepest privacy; for how should her Majesty awaken so many tongues of Principalities and Nobilities, male and female, that spitefully watch her? Above all, however, 'on the 2nd of February,' that day of 'the Procession of blue Ribands,'† much was spoken of: somewhat, too, of Monseigneur de Rohan!—Poor Monseigneur, hadst thou three long ears, thou'dst hear her.

But will she not, perhaps in some future priceless Interview, speak a good word for thee? Thyself shalt speak it, happy Eminence; at least, write it: our tutelary Countess will be the bearer!—On the 21st of March goes off that long exculpatory imploratory Letter: it is the first Letter that went off from Cardinal to Queen; to be followed, in time, by 'above two hundred others;' which are graciously answered by verbal Messages, nay at length by Royal Autographs on gilt paper,—the whole delivered by our tutelary Countess.‡ The tutelary Countess comes and goes, fetching and carrying; with the gravity of a Roman Augur, inspects those extraordinary chicken-bowels, and draws prognostics from them. Things are in fair train: the Dauphiness took some offence at Monseigneur, but the Queen has nigh forgotten it. No inexorable Queen; ah no! So good, so free, light-hearted; only sore beset with malicious Polignacs and others;—at times, also, short of money.

Marie-Antoinette, as the reader well knows, has been much blamed for want of Etiquette. Even now, when the other accusations against her have sunk down to oblivion and the Father of Lies, this of wanting Etiquette survives her;—in the Castle of Ham, at this hour,§ M. de Polignac and Company may be wringing their hands, not without an oblique glance at her for bringing them thither. She indeed discarded Etiquette; once, when her carriage broke down, she even entered a hackney-coach. She would walk, too, at Trianon, in mere straw-hat, and perhaps muslin gown! Hence, the Knot of Etiquette being loosed, the Frame of Society broke up; and those astonishing 'Horrors of the French Revolution' supervened. On what Damocles' hairs must the judgment-sword hang over this distracted Earth!

Thus, however, it was that Tenterden Steeple brought, an influx of the Atlantic on us, and so Goodwin Sands. Thus too, might it be that because Father Noah took the liberty of, say, rinsing out his wine-vat, his Ark was floated off, and a world drowned.—Beautiful Highborn that wert so foully hurled low! For, if thy Being came to thee out of old Hapsburg Dynasties, came it not also (like my own) out of Heaven? *Sunt lachrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt.* Oh, is there a man's heart that thinks, without pity, of those long months and years of slow-wasting ignominy;—of thy Birth, soft-cradled in Imperial Schön-

* Compare Rohan's *Mémoires pour* (there are four of them), in the *Affaire du Collier*, with Lamotte's four. They go on in the way of controversy, of argument and response.

† Lamotte's *Mémoires Justificatifs* (London, 1788).

‡ See Georget: see Lamotte's *Mémoires*; in her Appendix of 'Documents' to that volume certain of these Letters are given.

§ A. D. 1833.

beams, the winds of heaven not to visit thy face too roughly, thy foot to light on softness, thy eye on splendour; and then of thy Death, or hundred Deaths, to which the Guillotine and Fouquier Tiville's judgment-bar was but the merciful end! Look there, O man born of woman! The bloom of that fair face is wasted, the hair is gray with care; the brightness of those eyes is quenched, their lids hang drooping, the face is stony pale as of one living in death. Mean weeds, which her own hand has mended,* attire the Queen of the world. The death-hurdle, where thou sittest pale, motionless, which only curses environ, has to stop: a people, drunk with vengeance, will drink it again in full draught, looking at thee there. Far as the eye reaches, a multitudinous sea of maniac heads; the air deaf with their triumph-yell! The Living-dead must shudder with yet one other pang; her startled blood yet again suffuses with the hue of agony that pale face, which she hides with her hands. There is, then, no heart to say, God pity thee! O, think not of these; think of Him whom thou worshippest, the Crucified,—who also treading the winepress alone, fronted sorrow still deeper; and triumphed over it, and made it holy; and built of it a 'Sanctuary of Sorrow,' for thee and all the wretched! Thy path of thorns is nigh ended. One long last look at the Tuilleries, where thy step was once so light,—where thy children shall not dwell. The head is on the block; the axe rushes—Dumb lies the World; that wild-yelling World, and all its madness, is behind thee.

Beautiful Highborn that wert so foully hurled low! Rest yet in thy innocent gracefully heedless seclusion, unintruded on by me, while rude hands have not yet desecrated it. Be the curtains, that shroud-in (if for the last time on this Earth) a Royal Life, still sacred to me. Thy fault, in the French Revolution, was that thou wert the Symbol of the Sin and Misery of a thousand years; that with Saint-Bartholomews and Jacques, with Gabelles and Dragonades and Parcs-aux-cerfs, the heart of mankind was filled full,—and foamed over, into all-involving madness. To no Napoleon, to no Cromwell wert thou wedded: such sit not in the highest rank, of themselves; are raised on high by the shaking and confounding of all the ranks! As poor peasants, how happy, worthy had ye two been! But by evil destiny ye were made a King and Queen of; and so both once more—are become an astonishment and a byword to all times.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TWO FIXED-IDEAS WILL UNITE.

"COUNTRESS DE LAMOTTE, then, had penetrated into the confidence of the Queen! Those gilt-paper Autographs were actually written by the Queen!" Reader, forget not to repress that too insatiable scientific curiosity of thine! What I know is, that a certain Villette-de-Rétaux, with military whiskers, denizen of Rascaldom, comrade there of Monsieur le Comte, is skilful in imitating hands. Certain it is also, that Madame la Comtesse has penetrated to the Trianon—Doorkeeper's. Nay, as Campan herself must admit, she has met, 'at a Man-midwife's in Versailles,' with worthy Queen's-valet Lesclaux,—or Deselos, for there is no uniformity in it. With these, or the like of these, she in the back-parlour of the Palace itself (if late enough), may pick a merrythought, sip the foam from a glass of Champagne. No farther seek her honours to disclose, for the present; or anatomically dissect, as we said, those extraordinary chicken-bowels, from which she, and she alone, can read Decrees of Fate, and also realise them.

Sceptic, seest thou his Eminence waiting there, in the moonlight, hovering to and fro on the back terrace, till she come out—from the ineffable Interview!† He is close muffled; walks restlessly observant; shy also, and courting the shade. She comes: up closer with thy capote, O Eminence, down with thy broadbrim; for she has an escort! 'Tis but the good Monsieur Queen's-valet Lesclaux; and now he is sent back again, as no longer needful. Mark him, Monseigneur, nevertheless; thou wilt see him yet another time. Monseigneur marks little: his heart is in the ineffable Interview, in the gilt-paper Autograph alone.—Queen's-valet Lesclaux! Methinks, he has much the stature of Villette, denizen of Rascaldom! Impossible!

How our Countess managed with Cagliostro! Cagliostro, gone from Strasburg, is as yet far distant, winging his way through dim Space; will not be here for months; only his 'predictions in cipher' are here. Here or there, however, Cagliostro, to our Countess, can be useful. At a glance, the eye of genius had descried him to be a bottomless slough of falsity, vanity, gulosity, and thick-eyed stupidity; of foulest material, but of fattest;—fit compost for the Plant she is rearing. Him who has deceived all Europe she can undertake to deceive. His Columbs, demonic Masonries, Egyptian Elixirs, what is all this to the light-giggling, exclusively practical Lamotte? It runs off from her, as all speculation, good, bad, and indifferent, has always done, 'like water from one in wax-cloth dress.' With the lips meanwhile she can honour it; Oil of Flattery, the best patent antifricition known, subdues all irregularities whatsoever.

On Cagliostro, again, on his side, a certain uneasy feeling might, for moments, intrude itself; the raven loves not ravens. But what can he do? Nay, she is partly playing his game; can he not spill her full cup yet, at the right season, and pack her out of doors? Oftenest, in their joyous orgies, this light fascinating Countess,—who perhaps has a design on his heart, seems to him but one other of those light *Papiliones*, who have fluttered round him in all climates; whom with grim muzzle he has snapt by the thousand.

Thus, what with light fascinating Countess, what with Quack of Quacks, poor Eminence de Rohan lies safe; his mud-volcano placidly simmering in thick Egyptian haze: withdrawn from all the world. Moving figures, as of men, he sees; takes not the trouble to look at. Court-cousins rally him; are answered in silence; or, if it go too far, in mud-explosions terrifico-absurd. Court-cousins and all mankind are unreal shadows merely; Queen's favour the only substance.

Nevertheless, the World, on its side too, has an existence; lies not idle in these days. It has got its Versailles Treaty signed, long months ago; and the plenipotentiaries all home again, for votes of thanks. Paris, London, and other great Cities and small, are working, intriguing, dying, being born. There, in the Rue Taranne, for instance, the once noisy Denis Diderot has fallen silent enough. Here also, in Bolt Court, old Samuel Johnson, like an over-wearied Giant, must lie down, and slumber without dream:—the rattling of carriages and wains, and all the world's din and business, rolling by, as ever, from of old.—Sieur Boehmer, however, has not yet drowned himself in the Seine; only walks haggard, wasted, purposing to do it.

News (by the merest accident in the world) reach Sieur Boehmer of Madame's new favour with her Majesty! Men will do much before they drown. Sieur Boehmer's Necklace is on Madame's table, his guttural-nasal rhetoric in her ear: he will abate many a pound and penny of the first just price; he will give cheerfully a Thousand Louis-d'or, as *cadeau*, to the generous Scion-of-Royalty that shall persuade her Majesty. The man's importunities grow quite annoying to our Countess; who, in her glib way, satirically prattles how she has been bored,—to Monseigneur, among others.

Dozing on down cushions, far inwards, with soft ministering Hebes, and luxurious appliances; with ranked Heydues, and a *Valetaille* innumerable, that shut-out the prose-world and its discord: thus lies Monseigneur, in enchanted dream. Can he, even in sleep, forget his tutelary Countess, and her service? By the delicatest presents he alleviates her distresses, most undeserved. Nay, once or twice, gilt Autographs, from a Queen,—with whom he is evidently rising to unknown heights in favour,—have done Monseigneur the honour to make him her Majesty's Grand Almoner, when the case was pressing. Monseigneur, we say, has had the honour to disburse charitable cash, on her Majesty's behalf, to this or the other distressed deserving object: say only to the length of a few thousand pounds, advanced from his own funds;—her Majesty being at the moment so poor, and charity a thing that will not wait. Always Madame, good, foolish, gadding creature, takes charge of delivering the money.—Madame can descend from her attics, in

* Weber, *Mémoires concernant Marie-Antoinette* (London, 1809), tome III. notes, p. 103.

† See Geogel.

the *Belle Image*; and feel the smiles of Nature and Fortune, a little; so bounteous has the Queen's Majesty been.*

To Monseigneur the power of money over highest female hearts had never been incredible. Presents have, many times, worked wonders. But then, O Heavens, *what present?* Scarcely were the Cloud-Compeller himself, all coined into new Louis-d'or, worthy to alight in such a lap. Loans, charitable disbursements, however, as we see, are permissible; these, by defect of payment, may become presents. In the vortex of his Eminence's day-dreams, lumbering multiform slowly round, this of impudent Bohmer and his Necklace, from time to time, turns up. Is the Queen's Majesty at heart desirous of it; but again, at the moment, too poor? Our tutelary Countess answers vaguely, mysteriously;—confesses at last, under oath of secrecy, her own private suspicion that the Queen wants this same Necklace, of all things; but dare not, for a stingy husband, buy it. She, the Countess de Lamotte, will look farther into the matter; and, if aught serviceable to his Eminence can be suggested, will in a good way suggest it, in the proper quarter.

Walk warily, Countess de Lamotte; for now, with thickening breath, thou approachest the moment of moments! Principalities and Powers, *Parlement, Grand Chambre, and Tournelle*, with all their whips and gibbet-wheels; the very Crack of Doom hangs over thee, if thou trip. Forward, with nerve of iron, on shoes of felt; *like a Treasure-digger*, in silence, looking neither to the right nor left,—where yawn abysses deep as the Pool, and all Pandemonium hovers, eager to rend thee into rags!

CHAPTER IX.

PARK OF VERSAILLES.

OR will the reader incline rather, taking the other and sunny side of the matter, to enter that Lamottic-Circean theatrical establishment of Monseigneur de Rohan; and see there how, under the best of Dramaturgists, Melodrama with sweeping pall flits past him; while the enchanted Diamond fruit is gradually ripening, to fall by a shake?

The 28th of July, of this same momentous 1784, has come; and with it the most rapturous tumult into the heart of Monseigneur. Ineffable expectancy stirs-up his whole soul, with the much that lies therein, from its lowest foundations: borne on wild seas to Armida Islands, yet as is fit, through Horror dim-hovering round, he tumultuously rocks. To the Château, to the Park! This night the Queen will meet thee, the Queen herself: so far has our tutelary Countess brought it. What can ministerial impediments, Polignac intrigues, avail against the favour, nay—Heaven and Earth!—perhaps the tenderness of a Queen? She vanishes from amid their mesh-work of Etiquette and Cabal; descends from her celestial Zodiac, to thee a shepherd of Latmos. Alas, a white-bearded palsy shepherd, fat and scant of breath! Who can account for the taste of females? But thou, burnish up thy whole faculties of gallantry, thy fifty-years experience of the sex; this night, or never!—In such unutterable meditations does Monseigneur restlessly spend the day; and long for darkness, yet dread it.

Darkness has at length come. The perpendicular rows of Heyducs, in that Palais or Hôtel de Strasbourg, are all cast horizontal, prostrate in sleep; the very Concierge resupine, with open mouth, audibly drinks-in nepenthe; when Monseigneur, 'in blue greatcoat, with slouched hat,' issues softly, with his henchman Planta of the Grisons, to the Park of Versailles. Planta must loiter invisible in the distance; Slouched-hat will wait here, among the leafy thickets; till our tutelary Countess, 'in black domino,' announce the moment, which surely must be near.

The night is of the darkest for the season; no Moon; warm, slumbering July, in motionless clouds, drops fatness over the Earth. The very stars from the Zenith see not Monseigneur; see only his and the world's cloud-covering, fringed with twilight in the far North. Midnight, telling itself forth from these shadowy Palace Domes? All the steeples of Versailles, the villages around, with metal tongue, and huge Paris itself dull-droning, answer drowsily, Yes! Sleep rules this Hemisphere of the World. From Arctic to Antarctic, the Life of our Earth lies all, in long swaths,

or rows (like those rows of Heyducs and snoring Concierge), successively mown down, from vertical to horizontal, by Sleep! Rather curious to consider.

The flowers are all asleep in Little Trianon, the roses folded-in for the night; but the Rose of Roses still wakes. O wondrous Earth! O doubly wondrous Park of Versailles, with Little and Great Trianon,—and a scarce-breathing Monseigneur! Ye Hydraulics of Lenôtre, that also slumber, with stopcocks, in your deep leaden chambers, babble not of *him*, when ye arise. Ye odorous balm-shrubs, huge spectral Cedars, thou sacred Boscage of Hornbeam, ye dim Pavilions of the Peerless, whisper not! Moon, lie silent, hidden in thy vacant cave; no star look down: let neither Heaven nor Hell peep through the blanket of the Night, to cry, Hold, Hold!—The Black Domino? Ha! Yes!—With stouter step than might have been expected, Monseigneur is under way; the Black Domino had only to whisper, low and eager: 'In the Hornbeam Arbour!' And now, Cardinal, O now!—Yes, there hovers the white Celestial; 'in white robe of *linon moucheté*,' finer than moonshine; a Juno by her bearing: there, in that bosket! Monseigneur, down on thy knees; never can red breeches be better wasted. O, he would kiss the royal shoetic, or its shadow if there were one: not words; only broken gaspings, murmuring prostrations, eloquently speak his meaning. But, ah, behold! Our tutelary Black Domino, in haste, with vehement whisper: '*On vient!*' The white Juno drops a fairest Rose, with these ever-memorable words: '*Vous savez ce que cela veut dire*, You know what that means;' vanishes in the thicket, the Black Domino hurrying her with eager whisper of '*Vite, vite*, Away, away!' for the sound of footsteps (doubtless from Madame and Madame d'Artois, unwelcome sisters that they are!) is approaching fast. Monseigneur picks up his Rose; runs as for the King's plate, almost overturns poor Planta, whose laugh assures him that all is safe.*

O Ixion de Rohan, happiest mortal of this world, since the first Ixion, of deathless memory,—who nevertheless, in that cloud-embrace, begat strange Centaurs! Thou art Prime Minister of France without peradventure: is not this the Rose of Royalty, worthy to become ottar of roses, and yield perfume forever? How *thou*, of all people, wilt contrive to govern France, in these very peculiar times—But that is little to the matter. There, doubtless, is thy Rose (which, methinks, it were well to have a Box or Casket made for): nay, was there not in the dulcet of thy Juno's '*Vous savez*' a kind of trepidation, a quaver,—as of still deeper meanings!

Reader, there is hitherto no item of this miracle that is not historically proved and *true*.—In distracted black-magical phantasmagory, adumbrations of yet higher and highest Dalliances† hover stupendous in the background: whereof your Georgels, and Campans, and other official characters *can* take no notice! There in distracted black-magical phantasmagory, let these hover. The truth of them for us is that they do so hover. The truth of them in itself is known only to three persons: Dame self-styled Countess de Lamotte; the Devil; and Philippe Egalité,—who furnished money and facts for the *Lamotte Memoirs*, and, before guillotine-meat, begat the present King of the French.

Enough that Ixion de Rohan, lapsed almost into deliquium, by such sober certainty of waking bliss, is the happiest of all men; and his tutelary Countess the dearest of all women, save one only. On the 25th of August (so strong still are those villanous Drawing-room cabals) he goes, weeping, but submissive, by order of a gilt Autograph, home to Saverne; till farther dignities can be matured for him. He carries his Rose, now considerably faded, in a Casket of fit price; may, if he so please, perpetuate it as *pot-pourri*. He names a favourite walk in his Archiepiscopal pleasure-grounds, *Promenade de la Rose*; there let him court digestion, and loyally somnambulate till called for.

* Compare Georgel, Lamotte's *Mémoires Justificatifs*, and the *Mémoires pour* of the various parties, especially Gay d'Oliv'a's. Georgel places the scene in the year 1785; quite wrong. Lamotte's royal 'Autograph' (as given in the Appendix to *Mémoires Justificatifs*) seem to be misdated as to the day of the month. There is endless confusion of dates.

† Lamotte's *Mémoires Justificatifs*; Ms. Songs in the *Affaire du Collier*, etc. etc. Nothing can exceed the brutality of these things (unfit for Print or Pen); which nevertheless found believers,—increase of believers, in the public exasperation; and did the Queen, say all her historians, incalculable damage.

* Georgel; Rohan's four *Mémoires pour*; Lamotte's four.

I notice it as a coincidence in chronology, that, few days after this date, the Demoiselle (or even, for the last month, Baroness) Gay d'Oliva began to find Countess de Lamotte 'not at home,' in her fine Paris hotel, in her fine Charonne country-house; and went no more, with Villette, and such pleasant dinner-guests, and her, to see Beaumarchais' *Mariage de Figaro** running its hundred nights.

CHAPTER X.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

'THE QUEEN?' Good reader, *thou* surely art not a Partridge the Schoolmaster, or a Monseigneur de Rohan, to mistake the stage for a reality!—'But who this Demoiselle d'Oliva was?' Reader, let us remark rather how the labours of our Dramaturgic Countess are increasing.

New actors I see on the scene; not one of whom shall guess what the other is doing; or, indeed, know rightly what himself is doing. For example, cannot Messieurs de Lamotte and Villette, of Rascaldom, like Nisus and Euryalus, take a midnight walk of contemplation, with 'footsteps of Madame and Madame d'Artois' (since all footsteps are much the same), without offence to any one? A Queen's Similitude can believe that a Queen's Self, for frolic's sake, is looking at her through the thickets;† a terrestrial Cardinal can kiss with devotion a celestial Queen's slipper, or Queen's Similitude's slipper,—and no one but a Black Domino the wiser. All these shall follow each his precalculated course; for their inward mechanism is known, and fit wires hook themselves on this. To Two only is a clear belief vouchsafed: to Monseigneur, a clear belief founded on stupidity; to the great creative Dramaturgist, sitting at the heart of the whole mystery, a clear belief founded on completest insight. Great creative Dramaturgist! How, like Schiller, 'by union of the Possible with the Necessarily-existing, she brings out the'—Eighty thousand Pounds! Don Aranda, with his triple-sealed missives and hoodwinked secretaries, bragged justly that he cut-down the Jesuits in one day; but here, without ministerial salary, or King's favour, or any help beyond her own black domino, labours a greater than he. How she advances, stealthily, steadfastly, with Argus eye and ever-ready brain; with nerve of iron, on shoes of felt! O worthy to have intrigued for Jesuitdom, for Pope's Tiara;—to have been Pope Joan thyself, in those old days; and as Arachne of Arachnes, sat in the centre of that stupendous spider-web, which, reaching from Goa to Acapulco, and from Heaven to Hell, overnetted the thoughts and souls of men!—Of which spider-web stray tatters, in favourable dewy mornings, even yet become visible.

The Demoiselle d'Oliva? She is a Parisian Demoiselle of three-and-twenty, tall, blond, and beautiful;‡ from unjust guardians, and an evil world, she has had somewhat to suffer.

'In this month of June, 1784,' says the Demoiselle herself, in her (judicial) Autobiography, 'I occupied a small apartment in the Rue du Jour, Quartier St. Eustache. I was not far from the Garden of the Palais-Royal; I had made it my usual promenade.' For, indeed, the real God's-truth is, I was a Parisian unfortunate-female, with moderate custom; and one must go where his market lies. 'I frequently passed three or four hours of the afternoon there, with some women of my acquaintance, and a little child of four years old, whom I was fond of, whom his parents willingly trusted with me. I even went thither alone, except for him, when other company failed.

'One afternoon, in the month of July following, I was at the Palais-Royal: my whole company, at the moment, was the child I speak of. A tall young man, walking alone, passes several times before me. He was a man I had never seen. He looks at me; he looks fixedly at me. I observe even that always,

* Gay d'Oliva's First *Mémoire pour*, p. 37.

† See Lamotte; see Gay d'Oliva.

‡ I was then presented 'to two Ladies, one of whom was remarkable for the richness of her shape: she had blue eyes and chestnut hair' (Bette d'Etienneville's Second *Mémoire pour*; in the *Suite de l'Affaire du Collier*). This is she whom Bette and Bette's Advocate intended the world to take for Gay d'Oliva. 'The other is of middle size: dark eyes, chestnut hair, white complexion: the sound of her voice is agreeable; she speaks perfectly well, and with no less faculty than vivacity: this one is meant for Lamotte. Oliva's real name was Essigny; the Oliva (OLIVIA, anagram of VALOIS) was given her by Lamotte along with the title of Baroness (Ms. *Note, Affaire du Collier*).

as he comes near, he slackens his pace, as if to survey me more at leisure. A chair stood vacant; two or three feet from mine. He seats himself there.

'Till this instant, the sight of the young man, his walks, his approaches, his repeated gazings, had made no impression on me. But now when he was sitting so close by, I could not avoid noticing him. His eyes ceased not to wander over all my person. His air becomes earnest, grave. An unquiet curiosity appears to agitate him. He seems to measure my figure, to seize by turns all parts of my physiognomy.'—He finds me (but whispers not a syllable of it) tolerably like, both in person and profile; for even the Abbé Georget says, I was a *belle courtisane*.

'It is time to name this young man: he was the Sieur de Lamotte, styling himself Comte de Lamotte.' Who doubts it? He praises 'my feeble charms;' expresses a wish to 'pay his addresses to me.' I, being a lone spinster, know not what to say; think it best in the mean while to retire. Vain precaution! 'I see him all on a sudden appear in my apartment'!

On his 'ninth visit' (for he was always civility itself), he talks of introducing a great Court-lady, by whose means I may even do her Majesty some little secret-service,—the reward of which will be unspeakable. In the dusk of the evening, silks mysteriously rustle: enter the creative Dramaturgist, Dame styled Countess de Lamotte; and so—the too intrusive scientific reader has now, for his punishment, *got* on the wrong-side of that loveliest Transparency; finds nothing but grease-pots, and vapour of expiring wicks!

The Demoiselle Gay d'Oliva may once more sit, or stand, in the Palais-Royal, with such custom as will come. In due time, she shall again, but with breath of Terror, be blown upon; and blown out of France to Brussels.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NECKLACE IS SOLD.

AUTUMN, with its gray moaning winds and coating of red strewn leaves, invites Courtiers to enjoy the charms of Nature; and all business of moment stands still. Countess de Lamotte, while everything is so stagnant, and even Boehmer has locked-up his Necklace and his hopes for the season, can drive, with her Count and Euryalus Villette, down to native Bar-sur-Aube; and there (in virtue of a Queen's bounty) show the envious a Scion-of-Royalty re-grafted; and make them yellower looking on it. A well-varnished chariot, with the Arms of Valois duly painted in bend-sinister; a house gallantly furnished, bodies gallantly attired,—secure them the favourabest reception from all manner of men. The very Duc de Penthièvre (Egalité's father-in-law) welcomes our Lamotte, with that urbanity characteristic of his high station and the old school. Worth, indeed, makes the man, or woman; but 'leather' of gig-straps, and 'prunella' of gig-lining, first makes it *go*.

The great creative Dramaturgist has thus let down her drop-scene; and only, with a Letter or two to Saverne, or even a visit thither (for it is but a day's drive from Bar), keeps up a due modicum of intermediate instrumental music. She needs some pause, in good sooth, to collect herself a little; for the last act and grand Catastrophe is at hand. Two fixed-ideas, Cardinal's and Jeweller's, a negative and a positive, have felt each other; stimulated now by new hope, are rapidly revolving round each other, and approximating; like two flames, are stretching-out long fire-tongues to join and be one.

Boehmer, on his side, is ready with the readiest; as indeed he has been these four long years. The Countess, it is true, will have neither part nor lot in that foolish *cadeau* of his, or in the whole foolish Necklace business: this she has, in plain words, and even not without asperity, due to a bore of such magnitude, given him to know. From her nevertheless, by cunning inference, and the merest accident in the world, the sly Joaillier-Bijoutier has gleaned thus much, that Monseigneur de Rohan is the man.—Enough! Enough! Madame shall be no more troubled. Rest there, in hope, thou Necklace of the Devil; but, O Monseigneur, be thy return speedy!

Alas, the man lives not that would be speedier than Monseigneur, if he durst. But as yet no gilt Autograph invites him,

permits him; the few gilt Autographs are all negatory, procrastinating. Cabals of Court; forever cabals! Nay if it be not for some Necklace, or other such crotchet or necessity, who knows but he may never be recalled (so fickle is womankind); but forgotten, and left to rot here, like his Rose, into *pot-pourri*? Our tutelary Countess, too, is shyer in this matter than we ever saw her. Nevertheless, by intense skilful cross-questioning, he has extorted somewhat; sees partly how it stands. The Queen's Majesty will have her Necklace; for when, in such a case, had not woman her way? The Queen's Majesty can even pay for it—by instalments; but then the stingy husband! Once for all, she will not be seen in the business. Now, therefore: Were it, or were it not, permissible to mortal to transact it secretly in her stead? That is the question. If to mortal, then to Monseigneur. Our Countess has even ventured to hint afar off at Monseigneur (kind Countess!) in the proper quarter; but his discretion in regard to money-matters is doubted. Discretion? And I on the *Promenade de la Rose*?—Explode not, O Eminence! Trust will spring of trial; thy hour is coming.

The Lamottes meanwhile have left their farewell card with all the respectable classes of Bar-sur-Aube; our Dramaturgist stands again behind the scenes at Paris. How is it, O Monseigneur, that she is still so shy with thee in this matter of the Necklace; that she leaves the love-lorn Latmian shepherd to droop, here in lone Saverne, like weeping-ash, in naked winter, on his Promenade of the Rose, with vague commonplace responses that his hour is coming?—By Heaven and Earth! at last in late January, it is come. Behold it, this new gilt Autograph: 'To Paris, on a small business of delicacy, which our Countess will explain,'—which I already know! To Paris! Horses; postilions; beefeaters!—And so his resuscitated Eminence, all wrapt in furs, in the pleasantest frost (Abbé Georgel says, *un beau froid de Janvier*), over clear-jingling highways rolls rapidly,—borne on the bosom of Dreams.

O Dame de Lamotte, has the enchanted Diamond fruit ripened, then? Hast thou given it the little shake, big with unutterable fate?—I? can the Dame justly retort: Who saw me in it?—The reader, therefore, has still three scenic Exhibitions to look at, by our great Dramaturgist; then the Fourth and last,—by another Author.

To us, reflecting how oftenest the true moving force in human things works hidden underground, it seems small marvel that this month of January, 1785, wherein our Countess so little courts the eye of the vulgar historian, should nevertheless have been the busiest of all for her; especially the latter half thereof.

Wisely eschewing matters of Business (which she could never in her life understand), our Countess will personally take no charge of that bargain-making; leaves it all to her Majesty and the gilt Autographs. Assiduous Boehmer nevertheless is in frequent close conference with Monseigneur: the Paris Palais de Strasbourg, shut to the rest of men, sees the Joaillier-Bijoutier, with eager official aspect, come and go. The grand difficulty is—must we say it?—her Majesty's wilful whimsicality, unacquaintance with Business. She positively will not write a gilt Autograph, *authorising* his Eminence to make the bargain; but writes rather, in a pettish manner, that the thing is of no consequence, and can be given up! Thus must the poor Countess dash to and fro, like a weaver's shuttle, between Paris and Versailles; wear her horses and nerves to pieces; nay, sometimes in the hottest haste, wait many hours within call of the Palace, considering what *can* be done (with none but Vilette to bear her company),—till the Queen's whim pass.

At length, after furious-driving and conferences enough, on the 29th of January a middle course is hit on. Cautious Boehmer shall write out, on finest paper, his terms; which are really rather fair: Sixteen hundred thousand livres; to be paid in five equal instalments; the first this day six months; the other four from three months to three months; this is what Court-Jewellers, Boehmer and Bassange, on the one part, and Prince Cardinal Commendator Louis de Rohan on the other part, will stand to; witness their hands. Which written sheet of finest paper our poor Countess must again take charge of, again dash-off with to Versailles; and therefrom, after trouble unspeakable (shared in

only by the faithful Vilette, of Rascaldom), return with it, bearing this most precious marginal note, '*Bon—Marie Antoinette de France*,' in the Autograph-hand! Happy Cardinal! this thou shalt keep in the innermost of all thy repositories. Boehmer meanwhile, secret as Death, shall tell no man that he has sold his Necklace; or if much pressed for an actual sight of the same, confess that it is sold to the Favourite Sultana of the Grand Turk for the time being.*

Thus, then, do the smoking Lamotte horses at length get rubbed down, and feel the taste of oats, after midnight; the Lamotte Countess can also gradually sink into needful slumber, perhaps not unbroken by dreams. On the morrow the bargain shall be concluded; next day the Necklace be delivered, on Monseigneur's receipt.

Will the reader, therefore, be pleased to glance at the following two Life-Pictures, Real-Phantasmagories, or whatever we may call them: they are the two first of those Three scenic real-poetic Exhibitions, brought about by our Dramaturgist: short Exhibitions, but essential ones.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NECKLACE VANISHES.

It is the first day of February; that grand day of Delivery. The Sieur Boehmer is in the Court of the Palais de Strasbourg; his look mysterious-official, and though much emaciated, radiant with enthusiasm. The Seine has missed him; though lean, he will fatten again, and live through new enterprises.

Singular, were we not used to it: the name 'Boehmer,' as it passes upwards and inwards, lowers all halberts of Heyducs in perpendicular rows: the historical eye beholds him, bowing low, with plenteous smiles, in the plush Saloon of Audience. Will it please Monseigneur, then, to do the *ne-plus-ultra* of Necklaces the honour of looking at it? A piece of Art, which the Universe cannot parallel, shall be parted with (Necessity compels Court-Jewellers) at that ruinously low sum. They, the Court-Jewellers, shall have much ado to weather it; but their work, at least, will find a fit Wearer, and go down to juster posterity. Monseigneur will merely have the condescension to sign this Receipt of Delivery: all the rest, her Highness the Sultana of the Sublime Porte has settled it.—Here the Court-Jeweller, with his joyous though now much emaciated face, ventures on a faint knowing smile; to which, in the lofty dissolute-serene of Monseigneur's, some twinkle of permission could not but respond.—This is the First of those Three real-poetic Exhibitions, brought about by our Dramaturgist,—with perfect success.

It was said, long afterwards, that Monseigneur should have known, and even that Boehmer should have known, her Highness the Sultana's marginal-note, her '*Right—Marie-Antoinette of France*,' to be a forgery and mockery: the '*of France*' was fatal to it. Easy talking, easy criticising! But how are two enchanted men to know; two men with a fixed-idea each, a negative and a positive, rushing together to neutralise each other in rapture?—Enough, Monseigneur has the *ne-plus-ultra* of Necklaces, conquered by man's valour and woman's wit; and rolls off with it, in mysterious speed, to Versailles,—triumphant as a Jason with his Golden Fleece.

The Second grand scenic Exhibition by our Dramaturgic Countess occurs in her own apartment at Versailles, so early as the following night. It is a commodious apartment, with alcove; and the alcove has a glass door.† Monseigneur enters,—with a follower bearing a mysterious Casket, who carefully deposits it, and then respectfully withdraws. It is the Necklace itself in all its glory! Our tutelary Countess, and Monseigneur, and we, can at leisure admire the queenly Talisman; congratulate ourselves that the painful conquest of it is achieved.

But, hist! A knock, mild but decisive, as from one knocking with authority! Monseigneur and we retire to our alcove; there, from behind our glass screen, observe what passes. Who comes? The door flung open: *De par la Reine!* Behold him, Monseigneur: he enters with grave, respectful, yet official air; worthy Monsieur Queen's-valet Lesclaux, the same who escorted our tutelary Countess, that moonlight night, from the back apartments of Versailles. Said we not, thou wouldst see *him* once more?—Methinks, again, spite of his Queen's-uniform, he has

* Campan.

† Georgel, etc.

much the features of Villette of Rascaldom!—Rascaldom or Valetdom (for to the blind all colours are the same), he has, with his grave, respectful, yet official air, received the Casket, and its priceless contents; with fit injunction, with fit engagements; and retires bowing low.

Thus softly, silently, like a very Dream, flits away our solid Necklace—through the Horn Gate of Dreams!

CHAPTER XIII.

SCENE THIRD: BY DAME DE LAMOTTE.

Now too, in these same days (as he can afterwards prove by affidavit of Landlords) arrives Count Cagliostro himself, from Lyons! No longer by predictions in cipher; but by his living voice, often in rapt communion with the unseen world, 'with Caraffe and four candles;' by his greasy prophetic bulldog face, said to be the 'most perfect quack-face of the eighteenth century,' can we assure ourselves that all is well; that all will turn 'to the glory of Monseigneur, to the good of France, and of mankind,* and of Egyptian masonry. 'Tokay flows like water;' our charming Countess, with her piquancy of face, is sprightlier than ever; enlivens with the brightest sallies, with the adroitest flatteries to all, those suppers of the gods. O Nights, O Suppers—too good to last! Nay, now also occurs another and Third scenic Exhibition, fitted by its radiance to dispel from Monseigneur's soul the last trace of care.

Why the Queen does not, even yet, openly receive me at Court? Patience, Monseigneur! Thou little knowest those too-intricate cabals; and how she still but works at them silently, with royal suppressed fury, like a royal lioness only *delivering* herself from the hunter's toils. Meanwhile, is not thy work done? The Necklace, she rejoices over it; beholds, many times in secret, her Juno-neck mirrored back the lovelier for it,—as our tutelary Countess can testify. Come tomorrow to the *Œil de Bœuf*; there see with eyes, in high noon, as already in deep midnight thou hast seen, whether in *her* royal heart there were delay.

Let us stand, then, with Monseigneur, in that *Œil de Bœuf*, in the Versailles Palace Gallery; for all well-dressed persons are admitted; there the Loveliest, in pomp of royalty, will walk to mass. The world is all in pelisses and winter furs; cheerful, clear,—with noses tending to blue. A lively-many-voiced hum plays fitful, hither and thither; of sledge parties and Court parties; frosty state of the weather; stability of M. de Calonne; Majesty's looks yesterday;—such hum as always, in these sacred Court-spaces, since Louis le Grand made and consecrated them, has, with more or less impetuosity, agitated our common Atmosphere.

Ah, through that long high gallery what figures have passed—and vanished! Louvois,—with the Great King, flashing fire-glances on the fugitive; in his red right hand a pair of tongs, which pious Maintenon hardly holds back: Louvois, where art thou? Ye *Maréchaux de France*? Ye unmentionable-women of past generations? Here also was it that rolled and rushed the 'sound, absolutely like thunder,'† of Courtier hosts; in that dark hour when the signal-light in Louis the Fifteenth's chamber-window was blown out; and his ghastly infectious Corpse lay lone, forsaken on its tumbled death-lair, 'in the hands of some poor women;' and the Courtier hosts rushed from the Deep-fallen to hail the New-risen! These too rushed, and passed; and their 'sound, absolutely like thunder,' became silence. Figures? Men? They are fast-fleeting Shadows; fast chasing each other: it is not a Palace, but a Caravansera.—Monseigneur (with thy too-much Tokay overnight)! cease puzzling: here *thou* art, this blessed February day:—the Peerless, will she turn lightly that high head of hers, and glance aside into the *Œil de Bœuf*, in passing? Please Heaven, she will. To our tutelary Countess, at least, she promised it;‡ though, alas, so fickle is woman-kind!—

Hark! Clang of opening doors! She issues, like the Moon in silver brightness, down the Eastern steps. *La Reine vient!* What a figure! I (with the aid of glasses) discern *her*. O Fairest, Peerless! Let the hum of minor discoursing hush itself

wholly; and only one successive rolling peal of *Vive la Reine!* like the movable radiance of a train of fireworks, irradiate her path.—Ye Immortals! She does, she beckons, turns her head this way!—'Does she not?' says Countess de Lamotte.—Versailles, the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, and all men and things are drowned in a Sea of Light; Monseigneur and that high beckoning Head are alone, with each other in the Universe.

O Eminence, what a beatific vision! Enjoy it, blest as the gods; ruminate and re-enjoy it, with full soul: it is the last provided for thee. Too soon, in the course of these six months, shall thy beatific vision, like Mirza's vision, gradually melt away; and only oxen and sheep be grazing in its place;—and thou, as a doomed Nebuchadnezzar, be grazing with them.

'Does she not?' said the Countess de Lamotte. That it is a habit of hers; that hardly a day passes *without* her doing it: this the Countess de Lamotte did not say.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NECKLACE CANNOT BE PAID.

HERE, then, the specially Dramaturgic labours of Countess de Lamotte may be said to terminate. The rest of her life is *Histrionic* merely, or *Histrionic* and *Critical*; as, indeed, what had all the former part of it been but a *Hypocrisis*, a more or less correct Playing of Parts! O 'Mrs. Facing-both-ways' (as old Bunyan said), what a talent hadst thou! No Proteus ever took so many shapes, no Chameleon so often changed colour. One thing thou wert to Monseigneur; another thing to Cagliostro, and Villette of Rascaldom; a third thing to the World, in printed *Mémoires*; a fourth thing to Philippe Egalité: all things to all men!

Let her, however, we say, but manage now to *act* her own parts, with proper *Histrionic* illusion; and, by *Critical* glosses, give her past Dramaturgy the fit aspect, to Monseigneur and others: this henceforth, and not new Dramaturgy, includes her whole task. Dramatic scenes, in plenty, will follow of themselves; especially that Fourth and final Scene, spoken of above as by another Author,—by *Destiny* itself.

For in the Lamotte Theatre, so different from our common Pasteboard one, the Play goes on, even when the Machinist has left it. Strange enough: those Air-images, which from her Magic-lantern she hung out on the empty bosom of Night, have clutched hold of this solid-seeming World (which some call the Material World, as if that made it more a Real one), and will tumble hither and thither the solidest masses there. Yes, reader, so goes it here below. What thou callest a Brain-web, or mere illusive Nothing, *is* it not a web of the Brain; of the Spirit which inhabits the Brain; and which, in this World (rather, as I think, to be named the Spiritual one), very naturally moves and tumbles hither and thither all things it meets with, in Heaven or in Earth?—So too, the Necklace, though we saw it vanish through the Horn Gate of Dreams, and in my opinion man shall never more behold it,—yet its activity ceases not, nor will. For no Act of a man, no Thing (how much less the man himself!) is extinguished when *it* disappears: through considerable times it still visibly works, though done and vanished; I have known a done thing work visibly Three Thousand Years and more: invisibly, unrecognised, all done things work through endless times and years. Such a Hypermagical is this our poor old Real world; which some take upon them to pronounce *effete*, prosaic! Friend, it is thyself that art all withered up into *effete* Prose, dead as ashes: know this (I advise thee); and seek passionately, with a passion little short of desperation, to have it remedied.

Meanwhile, what will the feeling heart think to learn that Monseigneur de Rohan, as we prophesied, again experiences the fickleness of a Court; that, notwithstanding beatific visions at noon and midnight, the Queen's Majesty, with the light ingratitude of her sex, flies off at a tangent; and far from ousting his detested and detesting rival, Minister Breteuil, and openly delighting to honour Monseigneur, will hardly vouchsafe him a few gilt Autographs, and those few of the most capricious, suspicious, soul-confusing tenour? What terrifico-absurd explosions, which scarcely Cagliostro, with Caraffe and four candles, can still; how many deep-weighed Humble Petitions,

* Georgel, etc.

† Campan.

‡ See Georgel.

Explanations, Expostulations, penned with fervid eloquence, with craftiest diplomacy,—all delivered by our tutelary Countess; in vain!—O Cardinal, with what a huge iron mace, like Guy of Warwick's, thou smitest Phantasms in two, which close again, take shape again; and only thrashest the air!

One comfort, however, is that the Queen's Majesty has committed herself. The Rose of Trianon, and what may pertain thereto, lies it not here? That '*Right—Marie-Antoinette of France*,' 'of France' too; and the 30th of July, first instalment day, coming! She shall be brought to terms, good Eminence! Order horses and beef-eaters for Saverne; there, ceasing all written or oral communication, starve her into capitulating.* It is the bright May month: his Eminence again somnambulates the *Promenade de la Rose*; but now with grim dry eyes; and, from time to time, terrifically stamping.

But who is this that I see mounted on costliest horse and horse-gear; betting at Newmarket Races; though he can speak no English word, and only some Chevalier O'Neil, some Capuchin Macdermot, from Bar-sur-Aube, interprets his French into the Dialect of the Sister Island? Few days ago I observed him walking in Fleet-street, thoughtfully through Temple Bar;—in deep treaty with Jeweller Jeffreys, with Jeweller Grey,† for the sale of Diamonds: such a lot as one may boast of. A tall handsome man; with ex-military whiskers; with a look of troubled gaiety and rascalism: you think it is the Sieur self-styled Count de Lamotte; nay the man himself confesses it! The Diamonds were a present to his Countess,—from the still-bountiful Queen.

Villette too, has he completed his sales at Amsterdam? Him I shall by-and-by behold; not betting at Newmarket, but drinking wine and ardent spirits in the Taverns of Geneva. Ill-gotten wealth endures not; Rascaldom has no strong-box. Countess de Lamotte, for what a set of cormorant scoundrels hast thou laboured, art thou still labouring!

Still labouring, we may say: for as the fatal 30th of July approaches, what is to be looked for but universal Earthquake; Mud-explosion that will blot out the face of Nature? Methinks, stood I in thy pattens, Dame de Lamotte, I would cut and run.—'Run!' exclaims she, with a toss of indignant astonishment: 'Calumniated Innocence run?' For it is singular how in some minds, which are mere bottomless 'chaotic whirlpools of gilt shreds,' there is no deliberate Lying whatever; and nothing is either believed or disbelieved, but only (with some transient suitable Histrionic emotion) spoken and heard.

Had Dame de Lamotte a certain greatness of character, then; at least, a strength of transcendent audacity, amounting to the bastard-heroic! Great, indubitably great, is her Dramaturgic and Histrionic talent; but as for the rest, one must answer, with reluctance, No. Mrs. Facing-both-ways is a 'Spark of vehement Life,' but the farthest in the world from a brave woman; she did not, in any case, show the bravery of a woman; did, in many cases, show the mere screaming trepidation of one. Her grand quality is rather to be reckoned negative: the 'untameableness' as of a fly; the 'wax-cloth dress' from which so much ran down like water. Small sparrows, as I learn, have been trained to fire cannon; but would make poor Artillery Officers in a Waterloo. Thou dost not call that Cork a strong swimmer? Which nevertheless shoots, without hurt, the Falls of Niagara; defies the thunderbolt itself to sink it, for more than a moment. Without intellect, imagination, power of attention, or any spiritual faculty, how brave were one,—with fit motive for it, such as hunger! How much might one dare, by the simplest of methods, by not thinking of it, not knowing it!—Besides, is not Cagliostro, foolish blustering Quack, still here? No scapegoat had ever broader back. The Cardinal too, has he not money? Queen's Majesty, even in effigy, shall not be insulted; the Soubises, De Marsans, and high and puissant Cousins, must huddle the matter up: Calumniated Innocence, in the most universal of Earthquakes, will find some crevice to whisk through, as she has so often done.

But all this while how fares it with his Eminence, left somnambulating the *Promenade de la Rose*; and at times trucu-

lently stamping? Alas, ill, and ever worse. The starving method, singular as it may seem, brings no capitulation; brings only, after a month's waiting, our tutelary Countess, with a gilt Autograph, indeed, and 'all wrapt in silk threads, sealed where they cross,'—but which we read with curses.*

We must back again to Paris; there pen new Expostulations; which our unwearied Countess will take charge of, but, alas, can get no answer to. However, is not the 30th of July coming?—Behold, on the 19th of that month, the shortest, most careless of Autographs: with some fifteen hundred pounds of real money in it, to pay the—*interest* of the first instalment; the principal, of some thirty thousand, not being at the moment perfectly convenient! Hungry Boehmer makes large eyes at this proposal; will accept the money, but only as part of payment; the man is positive: a Court of Justice, if no other means, shall get him the remainder. What now is to be done?

Farmer-general Monsieur Saint-James, Cagliostro's disciple, and wet with Tokay, will cheerfully advance the sum needed—for her Majesty's sake; thinks, however (with all his Tokay), it were good to *speak* with her Majesty first.—I observe, meanwhile, the distracted hungry Boehmer driven hither and thither, not by his fixed-idea; alas, no, but by the far more frightful *ghost* thereof,—since no payment is forthcoming. He stands, one day, speaking with a Queen's waiting-woman (Madame Campan herself), in 'a thunder-shower, which neither of them notice,' so thunderstruck are they.† What weather-symptoms for his Eminence!

The 30th of July has come, but no money; the 30th is gone, but no money. O Eminence, what a grim farewell of July is this of 1785! The last July went out with airs from Heaven and Trianon Roses. *These* August days, are they not not worse than dogs' days; worthy to be blotted out from all Almanacs? Boehmer and Bassange thou canst still see; but only 'return from them swearing.'‡ Nay, what new misery is this? Our tutelary Histrionic Countess enters, distraction in her eyes:§ she has just been at Versailles; the Queen's Majesty, with a levity of caprice which we dare not trust ourselves to characterise, declares plainly that she will deny ever having got the Necklace; ever having had, with his Eminence, any transaction whatsoever!—Mud-explosion without parallel in volcanic annals.—The Palais de Strasbourg appears to be beset with spies; the Lamottes, for the Count too is here, are packing-up for Bar-sur-Aube. The Sieur Boehmer, has he fallen insane? Or into communication with Minister Breteuil?—

And so, distractedly and distractively, to the sound of all Discords in Nature, opens that Fourth, final Scenic Exhibition, composed by Destiny.

CHAPTER XV.

SCENE FOURTH: BY DESTINY.

It is Assumption-day, the 15th of August. Don thy pontificalia, Grand-Almoner; crush-down these hideous temporalities out of sight. In any case, smooth thy countenance into some sort of lofty-dissolute serene: thou hast a thing they call worshipping God to enact, thyself the first actor.

The Grand-Almoner has done it. He is in Versailles *Œil-de-Bœuf* Gallery; where male and female Peerage, and all Noble France, in gala various and glorious as the rainbow, waits only the signal to begin worshipping: on the serene of his lofty-dissolute countenance there can nothing be read.|| By Heaven! he is sent for to the Royal Apartment!

He returns with the old lofty-dissolute look, inscrutably serene: has his turn for favour actually come, then? Those fifteen long years of soul's travail are to be rewarded by a birth?—Monsieur le Baron de Breteuil issues; great in his pride of place, in this the crowning moment of his life. With one radiant glance, Breteuil summons the Officer on Guard; with another, fixes

* See Lamotte. † Campan. ‡ Lamotte. § Georgel.

† Grey lived in No. 13, New Bond Street; Jeffreys in Piccadilly (Rohan's *Mémoire pour*; see also Count de Lamotte's Narrative, in the *Mémoires Justificatifs*). Rohan's says 'Jeffreys bought more than 10,000*l.* worth.'

|| This is Bette d'Etenville's description of him: 'A handsome man, of fifty; with high complexion; hair white-gray, and the front of the head bald; of high stature; carriage noble and easy, though burdened with a certain degree of corpulency; who, I never doubted, was Monsieur de Rohan.' (First *Mémoire pour*.)

Monseigneur: 'De par le Roi, Monseigneur: you are arrested! At your risk, Officer!'—Curtains as of pitch-black whirlwind envelop Monseigneur, whirl off with him, to outer darkness. Versailles Gallery explodes aghast; as if Guy Fawkes' plot had burst under it. 'The Queen's Majesty was weeping,' whisper some. There will be no Assumption-service; or such a one as was never celebrated since Assumption came in fashion.

Europe, then, shall ring with it from side to side!—But why rides that Heyduc as if all the Devils drove him? It is Monseigneur's Heyduc: Monseigneur spoke three words in German to him, at the door of his Versailles Hotel; even handed him a slip of writing, which, with borrowed Pencil, 'in his red square cap,' he had managed to prepare on the way thither.* To Paris! To the Palais-Cardinal! The horse dies on reaching the stable; the Heyduc swoons on reaching the cabinet: but his slip of writing fell from his hand; and I (says the Abbé Georgel) was there. The red Portfolio, containing all the gilt Autographs, is burnt utterly, with much else, before Breteuil can arrive for apposition of the seals!—Whereby Europe, in ringing from side to side, must worry itself with guessing: and at this hour, on this paper, sees the matter in such an interesting clear-obscure.

Soon Count Cagliostro and his Seraphic Countess go to join Monseigneur in State Prison. In few days follows Dame de Lamotte, from Bar-sur-Aube; Demoiselle d'Oliva by-and-by, from Brussels; Villette-de-Rétaux, from his Swiss retirement in the taverns of Geneva. The Bastille opens its iron bosom to them all.

CHAPTER LAST.

MISSA EST.

THUS, then, the Diamond Necklace having, on the one hand, vanished through the Horn Gate of Dreams, and so, under the pincers of Nisus Lamotte and Euryalus Villette, lost its sublunary individuality and being; and, on the other hand, all that trafficked in it, sitting now safe under lock and key, that justice may take cognisance of them,—our engagement in regard to the matter is on the point of terminating. That extraordinary '*Procès du Collier, Necklace Trial*,' spinning itself through Nine other ever-memorable Months, to the astonishment of the hundred and eighty-seven assembled *Parlementiers*, and of all Quidnuncs, Journalists, Anecdotists, Satirists, in both Hemispheres, is, in every sense, a '*Celebrated Trial*,' and belongs to Publishers of such. How, by innumerable confrontations and expiscatory questions, through entanglements, doublings and windings that fatigue eye and soul, this most involute of Lies is finally wound off to the scandalous-ridiculous cinder-heart of it, let others relate.

Meanwhile, during these Nine ever-memorable Months till they terminate late at night precisely with the May of 1786,† how many fugitive leaves, quizzical, imaginative, or at least mendacious, were flying about in Newspapers; or stitched together as Pamphlets; and what heaps of others were left creeping in Manuscript, we shall not say;—having, indeed, no complete Collection of them, and what is more to the purpose, little to do with such Collection. Nevertheless, searching for some fit Capital of the composite order, to adorn adequately the now finished singular Pillar of our Narrative, what can suit us better than the following, so far as we know yet unedited?

Occasional Discourse, by Count Alessandro Cagliostro, Thaumaturgist, Prophet and Arch-Quack; delivered in the Bastille: Year of Lucifer, 5789; of the Mahometan Hegira from Mecca, 1201; of the Cagliostic Hegira from Palermo, 24; of the Vulgar Era, 1785.

'Fellow Scoundrels,—An unspeakable Intrigue, spun from the soul of that Circe-Megara, by our voluntary or involuntary help, has assembled us all, if not under one roof-tree, yet within one grim iron-bound ring-wall. For an appointed

* Georgel.

† On the 31st of May 1786 sentence was pronounced; about ten at night the Cardinal got out of the Bastille; large mobs hurrahing round him,—out of spleen to the Court. (See Georgel.)

number of months, in the ever-rolling flow of Time, we, being gathered from the four winds, did by Destiny work together in body corporate; and, joint labourers in a Transaction already famed over the Globe, obtain unity of Name, like the Argonauts of old, as *Conquerors of the Diamond Necklace*. Erelong it is done (for ring-walls hold not captive the free Scoundrel forever); and we disperse again, over wide terrestrial Space; some of us, it may be, over the very marches of Space. Our Act hangs indissoluble together; floats wondrous in the older and older memory of men: while *we* the little band of Scoundrels, who saw each other, now hover so far asunder, to see each other no more, if not once more only on the universal Doomsday, the Last of the Days!

'In such interesting moments, while we stand within the verge of parting, and have not yet parted, methinks it were well here, in these sequestered Spaces, to institute a few general reflections. Me, as a public speaker, the Spirit of Masonry, of Philosophy and Philanthropy, and even of Prophecy, blowing mysterious from the Land of Dreams, impels to do it. Give ear, O Fellow Scoundrels, to what the Spirit utters; treasure it in your hearts, practise it in your lives.

'Sitting here, penned-up in this which, with a slight metaphor, I call the Central Cloaca of Nature, where a tyrannical De Launay can forbid the bodily eye free vision, you with the mental eye see but the better. This Central Cloaca, is it not rather a Heart, into which, from all regions, mysterious conduits introduce and forcibly inject whatsoever is choicest in the Scoundrelism of the Earth; there to be absorbed, or again (by the other auricle) ejected into new circulation? Let the eye of the mind run along this immeasurable venous-arterial system; and astound itself with the magnificent extent of Scoundrelism; the deep, I may say unfathomable, significance of Scoundrelism.

'Yes, brethren, wide as the Sun's range is our Empire; wider than old Rome's in its palmiest era. I have in my time been far; in frozen Muscovy, in hot Calabria, east, west, wheresoever the sky overarches civilised man: and never hitherto saw I myself an alien; out of Scoundrelism I never was. Is it not even said, from of old, by the opposite party: "*All men are liars*"? Do they not (and this nowise "in haste") whimperingly talk of "one just person" (as they call him), and of the remaining thousand save one that take part with us? So decided is our majority.'—(Applause.)

'Of the Scarlet Woman,—yes, Monseigneur, without offence,—of the Scarlet Woman that sits on Seven Hills, and her Black Jesuit Militia, out foraging from Pole to Pole, I speak not; for the story is too trite: nay, the Militia itself, as I see, begins to be disbanded, and invalidated, for a second treachery; treachery to herself! Nor yet of Governments; for a like reason. Ambassadors, said an English punster, *lie* abroad for their masters. Their masters, we answer, lie at home for themselves. Not of all this, nor of Courtship with its Lovers'-vows, nor Courtiership, nor Attorneyism, nor Public Oratory and Selling by Auction, do I speak: I simply ask the gainsayer: Which is the particular trade, profession, mystery, calling, or pursuit of the Sons of Adam that they successfully manage in the other way? He cannot answer!—No: Philosophy itself, both practical and even speculative, has at length, after shamefulest groping, stumbled on the plain conclusion that Sham is indispensable to Reality, as Lying to Living; that without Lying the whole business of the world, from swaying of senates to selling of tapes, must explode into anarchic discords, and so a speedy conclusion ensue.

'But the grand problem, Fellow Scoundrels, as you well know, is the *marrying* of Truth and Sham; so that they become one flesh, man and wife, and generate these three: Profit, Pudding, and Respectability that always keeps her Gig. Wondrously, indeed, do Truth and Delusion play into one another; Reality rests on Dream. Truth is but the *skin* of the bottomless Untrue: and ever, from time to time, the Untrue *sheds* it; is clear again; and the superannuated True itself becomes a Fable. Thus do all hostile things crumble back into our Empire; and of its increase there is no end.

'O brothers, to think of the Speech without meaning (which is mostly ours), and of the Speech with contrary meaning (which is wholly ours), manufactured by the organs of Mankind in one solar day! Or call it a day of Jubilee, when public Dinners are

given, and Dinner-orations are delivered: or, say, a Neighbouring Island in time of General Election! O ye immortal gods! The mind is lost; can only admire great Nature's plenteousness with a kind of sacred wonder.

'For tell me: What is the chief end of man? "To glorify God," said the old Christian Sect, now happily extinct. "To eat and find eatables by the readiest method," answers sound Philosophy, discarding whims. If the method *readier* than this of persuasive-attraction is yet discovered—point it out!—Brethren, I said the old Christian Sect was happily extinct: as, indeed, in Rome itself, there goes the wonderfulest traditional Prophecy,* of that Nazareth Christ coming back, and being crucified a second time *there*; which truly I see not in the least how he could fail to be. Nevertheless, that old Christian whim, of an actual living and ruling God, and some sacred covenant binding all men in Him, with much other mystic stuff, does, under new or old shape, linger with a few. From these few keep yourselves forever far! They must even be left to their whim, which is not like to prove infectious.

'But neither are we, my Fellow Scoundrels, without our Religion, our Worship; which, like the oldest, and all true Worships, is one of Fear. The Christians have their Cross, the Moslem their Crescent: but have not we too our—Gallows! Yes, *infinitely* terrible is the Gallows; it bestrides with its patibulary fork the Pit of bottomless Terror! No Manicheans are we; our God is One. Great, exceeding great, I say, is the Gallows; of old, even from the beginning, in this world; knowing neither variability nor decadence; forever, forever, over the wreck of ages, and all civic and ecclesiastic convulsions, meal-mobs, revolutions, the Gallows with front serenely terrible towers aloft. Fellow Scoundrels, fear the Gallows, and have no other fear! *This* is the Law and the Prophets. Fear every emanation of the Gallows. And what is every buffet, with the fist, or even with the tongue, of one having authority, but some such emanation? And what is Force of Public Opinion but the infinitude of such emanations,—rushing combined on you, like a mighty storm-wind? Fear the Gallows, I say! O when, with its long black arm, it has clutched a man, what avail him all terrestrial things? These pass away, with horrid nameless dinning in his ears; and the ill-starred Scoundrel pendulates between Heaven and Earth, a thing rejected of *both*.—(Profound sensation.)

'Such, so wide in compass, high, gallows-high in dignity, is the Scoundrel Empire; and for depth, it is deeper than the Foundations of the World. For what was Creation itself wholly, according to the best Philosophers, but a Divulsion by the TIME-SPIRIT (or Devil so-called); a forceful Interruption, or breaking asunder, of the old Quiescence of Eternity? It was Lucifer that fell, and made this lordly World arise. Deep? It is bottomless-deep; the very Thought, diving, bobs up from it baffled. Is not this that they call Vice of Lying the *Adam Kadmon*, or primeval Rude-Element, old as Chaos mother's-womb of Death and Hell; whereon their thin film of Virtue, Truth, and the like, poorly wavers—for a day? All Virtue, what is it, even by their own showing, but Vice transformed,—that is, manufactured, rendered artificial? "Man's Vices are the roots from which his Virtues grow out and see the light," says one: "Yes," added I, "and thanklessly steal their nourishment!" Were it not for the nine hundred ninety and nine unacknowledged, perhaps martyred and calumniated Scoundrels, how were their single Just Person (with a murrain on him!) so much as possible?—O, it is high, high: these things are too great for me; Intellect, Imagination, flags her tired wings; the soul lost, baffled!—

—Here Dame de Lamotte tittered audibly, and muttered *Cog-d'Inde*, which, being interpreted into the Scotch tongue, signifies *Bubbly Jock!* The Arch-Quack, whose eyes were turned inwards as in rapt contemplation, started at the titter and mutter: his eyes flashed outwards with dilated pupil; his nostrils opened wide; his very hair seemed to stir in its long twisted pigtails (his fashion of curl); and as Indignation is said to make Poetry, it here made Prophecy, or what sounded as such. With terrible working features, and gesticulation not recommended in any Book of Gesture, the Arch-Quack, in voice supernally discordant, like Lions worrying Bulls of Bashan, began:—

* Goethe mentions it (*Italiänische Reise*).

'Sniff not, Dame de Lamotte; tremble, thou foul Circe-Megæra; thy day of desolation is at hand! Behold ye the Sanhedrim of Judges, with their fanners of written Parchment, loud-rustling, as they winnow all her chaff and down-plumage, and she stands there naked and mean?—Villette, Oliva, do ye blab secrets? Ye have no pity of her extreme need; she none of yours. Is thy light-giggling, untamable heart at last heavy? Hark ye! Shrieks of one cast out; whom they brand on both shoulders with iron stamp; the red-hot "V," thou *Voleuse*, hath it entered thy soul? Weep, Circe de Lamotte; wail there in truckle-bed, and hysterically gnash thy teeth: nay do, smother thyself in thy door-mat coverlid; thou hast found thy mates; thou art in the Salpêtrière!—Weep, daughter of the high and puissant sans-inexpressibles! Buzz of Parisian Gossipry is about thee: but not to help thee: no, to eat before thy time. What shall a King's Court do with thee, thou unclean thing, while thou yet livest? Escape! Flee to utmost countries; hide there, if thou canst, thy mark of Cain!—In the Babylon of Fog-land! Ha! is that my London? See I Judas Iscariot Egalité? Print, yea print abundantly the abominations of your two hearts: breath of rattlesnakes can bedim the steel mirror, but only for a time.—And there! Ay, there at last! Tumblest thou from the lofty leads, poverty-stricken, O thriftless daughter of the high and puissant, escaping bailiffs? Descendest thou precipitate, in dead night, from window in the third storey; hurled forth by Bacchanals, to whom thy shrill tongue had grown unbearable? Yea, through the smoke of that new Babylon thou fallest headlong; one long scream of screams makes night hideous: thou liest there, shattered like addle egg, "nigh to the Temple of Flora!" O Lamotte, hast thy *Hypocrisia* ended then? Thy many characters were all acted. Here at last thou actest not, but art what thou seemest: a mangled squelch of gore, confusion and abomination; which men huddle underground, with no burial-stone. Thou gallows-carrion!—

—Here the Prophet turned up his nose (the broadest of the eighteenth century), and opened wide his nostrils with such a greatness of disgust, that all the audience, even Lamotte herself, sympathetically imitated him.—

'O Dame de Lamotte! Dame de Lamotte! Now, when the circle of thy existence lies complete; and my eye glances over these two score and three years that were lent thee, to do evil as thou couldst; and I beheld thee a bright-eyed little Tatterdemalion, begging and gathering sticks in the Bois de Boulogne; and also at length a squelched Putrefaction, here on London pavements; with the headdressings and hungerings, the gaddings and hysterical gigglings that came between,—*what* shall I say was the meaning of thee at all?—

'Villette-de-Rétaux! Have the catchpoles trepanned thee, by sham of battle, in thy Tavern, from the sacred Republican soil?† It is thou that wert the hired Forger of Handwritings? Thou wilt confess it? Depart unwhipt, yet accursed.—Ha! The dread Symbol of our Faith? Swings aloft, on the Castle of St. Angelo, a Pendulous Mass which I think I discern to be the body of Villette? There let him end; the sweet morsel of our Juggernaut.

'Nay, weep not thou, disconsolate Oliva; blear not thy bright blue eyes, daughter of the shady Garden! Thee shall the Sanhedrim not harm: this Cloaca of Nature emits thee; as notablest of unfortunate-females, thou shalt have choice of husbands not without capital; and accept one.‡ Know this; for the vision of it is true.

* The English Translator of *Lamotte's Life* says, she fell from the leads of her house, nigh the Temple of Flora, endeavouring to escape seizure for debt; and was taken up so much hurt that she died in consequence. Another report runs, that she was flung out of window, as in the Cagliostic text. One way or other, she did die on the 23rd of August 1791 (*Biographie Universelle*, xxx. 287). Where the 'Temple of Flora' was, or is, one knows not.

† See Geogel, and Villette's *Mémoire*.

‡ In the *Affaire du Collier* is this Ms. Note: 'Gay d'Oliva, a common-girl of the Palais-Royal, who was chosen to play a part in this Business, got married, some years afterwards, to one Beausire, an Ex-Noble, formerly attached to the D'Artois Household. In 1790 he was Captain of the National Guard Company of the Temple. He then retired to Choisy, and managed to be named Procureur of that Commune: he finally employed himself in drawing-up Lists of Proscription in the Luxembourg Prison.'

'But the Anointed Majesty whom ye profaned? Blow, spirit of Egyptian Masonry, blow aside the thick curtains of Space! Lo you, her eyes are red with their first tears of pure bitterness; not with their last. Tirewoman Campan is choosing, from the Print-shops of the Quais, the reputed best among the hundred likenesses of Circe de Lamotte:* a Queen shall consider if the basest of women ever, by any accident, darkened daylight or candlelight for the highest. The Portrait answers: Never!'—(Sensation in the audience.)

'—Ha! What is *this*? Angels, Uriel, Anachiel, and ye other five; Pentagon of Rejuvenescence; Power that destroyed Original Sin; Earth, Heaven, and thou Outer Limbo which men name Hell! Does the EMPIRE OF IMPOSTURE waver? Burst there, in starry sheen updarting, Light-rays from out *its* dark foundations; as it rocks and heaves, not in travail-throes, but in death-throes? Yea, Light-rays, piercing, clear, that salute the Heavens,—lo, they *kindle* it; their starry clearness becomes as red Hell-fire! IMPOSTURE is in flames, Imposture is burnt up: one Red-sea of Fire, wild-billowing enwraps the World; with its fire-tongue licks at the very Stars. Thrones are hurled into it, and Dubois Mitres, and Prebendal Stalls that drop fatness, and—ha! what see I?—all the *Gigs* of Creation: all, all! Woe is me! Never since Pharaoh's Chariots, in the Red-sea of water, was there wreck of Wheel-vehicles like this in the sea of Fire. Desolate, as ashes, as gases, shall they wander in the wind.

'Higher, higher yet flames the Fire-Sea; crackling with new dislocated timber; hissing with leather and prunella. The metal Images are molten; the marble Images become mortar-lime; the stone Mountains sulkily explode. RESPECTABILITY, with all her collected Gigs inflamed for funeral pyre, wailing, leaves the Earth: not to return save under new Avatar. Imposture, how it burns, through generations: how it is burnt up—for a time. The World is black ashes; which, ah, when will they grow green? The Images all run into amorphous Corinthian brass; all Dwellings of men destroyed; the very mountains peeled and riven, the valleys black and dead: it is an empty World! Woe to them that shall be born then!—A King, a Queen (ah me!) were hurled in; did rustle once; flew aloft, crackling, like paper-scroll. Oliva's Husband was hurled in; Iscariot Egalité; thou grim De Launay, with thy grim Bastille; whole kindreds and peoples; five millions of mutually destroying Men. For it is the End of the Dominion of IMPOSTURE (which is darkness and opaque Firedamp); and the burning-up, with unquenchable fire, of all the Gigs that are in the Earth!—Here the Prophet paused, fetching a deep sigh; and the Cardinal uttered a kind of faint tremulous Hem!—

'Mourn not, O Monseigneur, spite of thy nephritic colic and many infirmities. For thee mercifully it was not unto death.† O Monseigneur (for thou hadst a touch of goodness), who would not weep over thee, if he also laughed? Behold! The not too judicious Historian, that long years hence, amid remotest wildernesses, writes thy Life, and names thee *Mud-volcano*; even he shall reflect that it *was* thy Life this same; thy *only* chance through whole Eternity; which thou (poor gambler) hast expended so: and, even over his hard heart, a breath of dewy pity for thee shall blow.—O Monseigneur, thou wert not all ignoble: thy *Mud-volcano* was but strength dislocated, fire misapplied. Thou wentest ravaging through the world; no Life-elixir or Stone of the Wise could *we* two (for want of funds) discover: a foulest Circe undertook to fatten thee; and thou hadst to fill thy belly with the east wind. And burst? By the Masonry of Enoch, No! Behold, has not thy Jesuit Familiar his Scouts dim-flying over the deep of human things? Cleared art thou of crime, save that of

when he played the part of informer (*mouton*). See *Tableau des Prisons de Paris sous Robespierre*. These details are correct. In the *Mémoires sur les Prisons* (new Title of the Book just referred to), ii. 171, we find this: 'The second Denouncer was Beausire, an Ex-Noble, known under the old government for his intrigues. To give an idea of him, it is enough to say that he married the D'Oliva,' etc., as in the Ms. Note already given. Finally is added: 'He was the main spy of Boyenval; who, however, said that he made use of him; but that Fouquier-Tinville did not like him, and would have him guillotined in good time.'

* See Campan.

† Roban was elected of the Constituent Assembly; and even got a compliment or two in it, as Court-victim, from here and there a man of weak judgment. He was one of the first who, recalcitrating against Civil Constitution of the Clergy etc., took himself across the Rhine.

fixed-idea; weepst, a repentant exile, in the Mount Auvergne. Neither shall the Red Fire-sea itself consume only consume thy Gig, and, instead of Gig (O rich ex-restore thy Self. Safe beyond the Rhine-stream, the peaceful days; savest many from the fire, and anoint smarting burns. Sleep finally, in thy mother's bosom, old age!—The Cardinal gave a sort of guttural murmur, which ended in a long sigh.—

'O Horrors, as ye shall be called,' again burst forth the 'why have ye missed the Sieur de Lamotte; why not of the made gallows-carrion? Will spear, or swordstick, thrust (or supposed to be thrust), through window of hackney-coach Piccadilly of the Babylon of Fog, where he jolts *down*, let out the imprisoned animal existence? Is he *poised*, as Poison will not kill the Sieur Lamotte; nor steel, *no*. Let him drag his utterly superfluous life to a second *and* generation; and even admit the not too judicious *Historian* his face before he die.

'But, ha!' cried he, and stood wide-staring, *horror* if some Cribb's fist had knocked the wind out of his horror of horrors! Is it not Myself I see? Roman *Imp* Long months of cruel baiting! *Life of Giuseppe* Cagliostro's Body still lying in St. Leo Castle, his *8* *whither*? Bystanders wag their heads, and say: "The Brass, behold how it has got all unacquainted; these *lips* can lie no more!" Eheu! Ohoo! And he burst stanchable blubbing of tears; and sobbing out the *broken* howl, sank down in swoon; to be put to be Launay and others.

Thus spoke (or thus might have spoken), and proph Arch-Quack Cagliostro: and truly much better than he did: for not a jot or tittle of it (save only that of our Interview with Nestor de Lamotte, which looks unlike ever, for we have not heard of him, dead or living, *si*—but has turned out to be literally *true*. As indeed, History, one jot or tittle of untruth, that we could *re* is perhaps not discoverable; much as the distrustful *re* have disbelieved.

Here, then, our little labour ends. The Necklace *was* no more: the stones of it again 'circulate in *Comm*, *them* perhaps in Rundle's at this hour; and *say* *give* what other Histories we know not. The Conquerors *of* one that trafficked in it, have they not all had *that* *was* Death?

This little Business, like a little cloud, bodied itself skies clear to the unobservant; but with such hues of *d* villany, dissoluteness and general delirium as, to the betokened it electric; and wise men, a Goethe for example Earthquakes. Has not the Earthquake come?

* See Lamotte's Narrative (*Mémoires Justificatifs*).

† Lamotte, after his wife's death, had returned to Paris arrested,—not for building churches. The Sentence of the *ol* against him, in regard to the Necklace Business, he gets *ann* new Courts; but is nevertheless 'retained in confinement Newspaper, 7th August 1792). He was still in Prison at the September Massacre broke out. From Maton de la Varenne following grim passage: Maton is in La Force Prison.

'At one in the morning' (of Monday, 3 Sept. 1792), writes grate that led to our quarter was again opened. Four men holding each a naked sabre and blazing torch, mounted to *ot* a turnkey showing the way; and entered a room close on our gate a box, which they broke open. This done, they halted in and began interrogating one Cuissa, to know where Lamotte they said, under pretext of finding a treasure, which they shot had swindled one of them out of 300 livres, having asked him for that purpose. The wretched Cuissa, whom they had in *),* and who lost his life that night, answered, all trembling, that bared the fact well, but could not say what had become of *t* Resolute to find this Lamotte and confront him with Cuissa, *th* into other rooms, and made further rummaging there; but without effect, for I heard them say to one another: "Come *se* the corpses, then; for, *nom de Dieu!* we must know what is him." (Ma *Résurrection*, par Maton de la Varenne; reprint *Histoire Parlementaire*, xviii. 142.)—Lamotte lay in the *Bied* but had got out, precisely in the nick of time,—and *di* soundings.



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